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# Temple of Spirituality

OR

# Golden Temple, Amritsar

BY

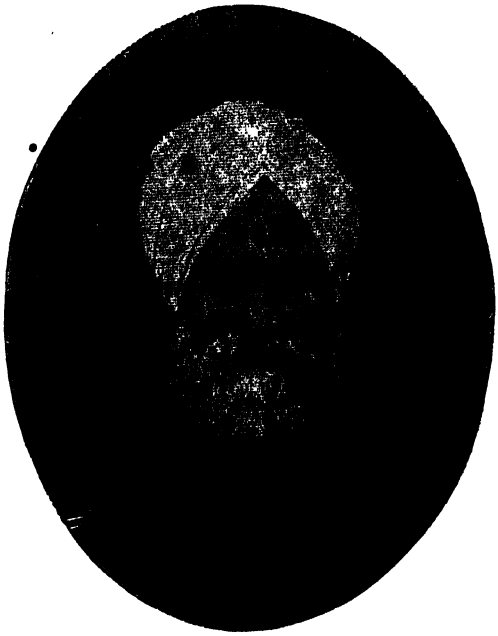
**JAGJIT SINGH**

*Those who look on merely the alabaster and the gold of this 'jewel of architecture' miss the Inner Spirit which pervades the whole building but for which it would have been another colorless Temple.*

PUBLISHED BY

The Sikh Religious Tract Society,
**TARN TARAN (PUNJAB)**

DEDICATED TO



BELOVED FATHER.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

To Sikhs their temples, which have played a great part in their history, are more important than the associations. So much so that their history consists of either establishment of temples or their protection against different kinds of aggressors. Sikh temples, better known as *Gurdwaras*, constitute institutions of *Hari Kirtan*, where the Disciples ponder to quench the outer fire and plunge again into deep peace of life. The Golden Temple at Amritsar, the the premier Sikh Shrine, forms the nucleus, around which centres the major part of the Sikh History and the succeeding pages would afford to our readers a peep into this 'Temple of Spirituality'.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to S. Jagjit Singh, who has very kindly spared time from his college studies, to revise his writing, in appreciation of which he was awarded a prize-medal worth Rs. 100 by the Macauliffe Memorial Committee, Khalsa College, Amritsar. We are proud to place this publication in our readers' hands to unveil to them the history of this 'Wonderful Institution'. We need not write more besides what Master Mota Singh ji Akali, a venerable Sikh leader, says about this book:

"S. Jagjit Singh, the younger son of Sriyut Vaidraj Bhai Sahib Mohan Singh ji, the eminent writer and scholar, and one of most distinguished member of the Sikh Community, is a born author, gifted with spiritual philosophical conatus. The public may be glad to receive from the pen of this young author the history of the Golden Temple, entitled as 'Temple of Spirituality'. We owe to him a tribute of thanks for having thrown so fresh a light and glow over a comparatively lurid period of history. He has delineated the whole narrrative in a vivid and attractive manner. The facts are arranged into a well-planned form, and are discretely woven into an inspiring story accompanied by a spirit of commentary. The Chronicled notes are brief and judicious. The Chronicles and legends which form a significant part of the book and enhance its literary grace are nowhere garbled and tinged with such accretions as could be exposed and condemned at the bar of reason. Such prodigious legends and miraculous events have been most prudently and scientifically purged off, which may temporarily stimulate our thought, but do in no way add dignity to the realities of life, and which are destined to fade under the glare of sound and pure rationalism. He has also done well to escape from dry and sceptic rationalism, which deviating from pure faith, ruthlessly leads us to "Destructive Nihilism". Thus in an admirable manner, the author has most agreeably balanced the history of 'Faith and Free Thought,' and reproduced all events quite in consonance with modern

science and philosophy. He possesses the quality, which eminently characterises him of keeping historical imagination under restraint of evidence. His research is striking and extensive.

This book is in every sense of the word a great accession to our historical literature, and a worthy edition to our popular history. I whole heartedly hail and appreciate the author's literary enthusiasm, and recommend the book to that attentive perusal which its title invites."

I crave the readers' indulgence for a few misprints which have crept in this book. A list of the most glaring of them is given at the end.

TARN TARAN. *Secretary.*
OCTOBER 1, 1935.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Words fail to express the feelings of admiration and gratitude which I entertain towards S. B. Bhai Sahib Kahn Singh ji, Nabha ; S. Gurcharn Singh ji, Delhi ; Prof. Teja Singh ji, M.A. ; Master Mota Singh ji, Akali; and S. Kartar Singh ji ; who very kindly went through the manuscript and gave very valuable suggestions. To each of them I tender my most sincere and heartiest thanks.

I am indebted to all my friends, who helped me in the preparation of this book in various ways; to all authors whose works I have consulted; to the Publicity Department, Indian State Railways, Delhi, and Manager, Pritam, Lahore for the loan of certain blocks; and the Sikh Religious Tract Society, Tarn Taran for undertaking the publication of this book.

Suggestions for the improvement of the book will be gratefully received.

JAGJIT SINGH

# FOREWORD

*By S. B. Bhai Sahib B. Kahn Singh ji, Nabha*

Bhai Mohan Singh ji Vaid, a Municipal Commissioner of Tarn Taran and a member of the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, is a learned scholar in the Sikh Community. He has written many useful books on religion, history, sociology, hygiene and social reforms. I am pleased to say, that his son S. Jagjit Singh is also following his father's footsteps.

He has written the history of the Golden Temple, Amritsar. It seems that he has taken a great deal of pains in collecting the material and arranging it. All those interested in the history of this Temple in particular and the faithful pilgrims in general will be greatly profited by it. I congratulate Sardar Jagjit Singh on his laudable effort in writing this book.

## PREFACE

"The first feeling that we have on entering church (temple) is one of peace and repose. The world is in such a hurry, and is moving, as some people tell us, so much faster than before, that we seem to want a few minutes of rest, an occasional breathing time before we go hence. We desire to be with God as we believe that we shall hereafter be with Him. Here, at any rate, the strife of tongues is hushed, the strain of mind is taken off, the cares of life are no longer immediately present to us: "There is a great calm." Here we pause for a moment in our journey that we may proceed refreshed. Here we are raised above the mean thoughts of mankind: we hear the words of saints and prophets of the old; we live for a short time in the nearer companionship of God and of another world; we pass in review the last day or two, and ask ourselves whether we are doing enough for others; we seek to realise in our minds a higher standard of duty and character. Here are revived in us those aspirations after another and better state of being, which in good men are always returning and are never completely satisfied, but which, like wings bear us on the sea of life, and prevent our sinking into the routine of custom which prevails around us. Here we resign ourselves to the pure thought, to the pure will, to the pure mind, which is the truer part of our own souls, and in which and through which we see God." Says Benjamin

Jowett, to them, who demand to know why they should go to their temples.

The world may rejoice in it many temples of many religions, and many more might be the temples, great and small from different standpoints, but the Golden Temple at Amritsar is unique. Sri Guru* Arjan Dev left us an image of His divine mind in this Dream of Marble It is not a building, it is life in its myriad glow of worship going endlessly in self-attraction round itself. It is the great Soul that rises like a golden lotus on the blue waters and is made manifest here in its perfume and in its live swarm of honey-bees buzzing about it.

Those who look on merely the alabaster and the gold miss the Inner Spirit which pervades the whole building of this Temple of Spirituality—the tabernacle where the Eternal Nam resides and for which it is one of unique wonders of the world. Only the "living ones" know this secret influence of the Temple. A great Vaishnava Faqir came from Brindaban, and was so impressed by the clear spiritual aura of the Golden Temple that his *Dhyanam* passed to the Masters of this Temple, and he never left it. A Mohammedan adept residing in the Western Punjab can never pass Amritsar in a railway-train without alighting and paying his homage to the *Hari Mandir* (Golden Temple). Says he, "So wonderful is the link between earth and Heaven here, that even now, after the Guru has been personally absent for hundreds of years from this land, the place still

* Guru literally means True Teacher.

possesses that old enchantment. The extinguished one are rekindled, the broken made whole, so mighty is the remaining effect."

All initiates and disciples here feel a solace unknown elsewhere. The other day the French Artist M. Jarl spoke to us of the effect of the Golden Temple on him. He said, "The light seems to come from within the Golden dome of the Temple, and it is this inner light that kindles the whole prospect around it."*

This Temple is the favourite resort of the aspirants to the spiritual life; thither they come to dip their torches in its light, and they might fill the land and its heart with the gleam that M. Jarl and others saw. The fresh vigour and inspiration that flooded the land can only be traced to the heart of the Guru.

To quench the flames of outer fire the Sikhs hurried to this Temple-Tank. The time came when every one was forbidden to have even '*darshanas*' of this Temple, but its inner magnetic force drew the Sikhs and its lovers to it. Though they were so often crowned with martyrdom yet there was no abatement in their zeal to approach it. The Sikhs sacrificed their lives and everything in attempt to procure the light of this Soul. That very light along with the sacrificed blood has prompted the author to pen this short historical sketch of the Remitter of that light—the Golden Temple.

* Puran Singh, Ten Masters, *pp* 55-56.

## ILLUSTRATIONS


1. Bhai Sahib B. Mohan Singh ji, Author's Father.
2. *Maharaja Ranjit Singh listening to the recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib near his grandson's palatial *Bunga*.
3. Akbar the Great.
4. Ahmad Shah, Abdali.
5. Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
6. S. Kharak Singh, Ex-President S.G P.C.
7. Lord Curzon.
8. Golden Temple—When there was no clock-tower.
9. Akal Takht.
10. Baba Atal and Kaulsar.
11. Temple and Tank of Tarn Taran.
12. Tarn Taran Kar-Sewa.


*From Sikh-point of view many a discrepency is seen in the illustration in which Maharaja Ranjit Singh is listening to the recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. This has been taken from an old drawing of that time and still preserved in *Tosha-Khana* of Sri Darbar Sahib. The main point is the presence of the palatial *Bunga* of Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh instead of Clock-Tower.

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'Sin is the king, Greed the minister, Falsehood the mint-master,
And Lust the deputy to take counsel with; they sit and confer together.
The blind subjects, out of ignorance, pay homage like dead men.'

The Punjab which had once been the land of power and wisdom had, through successive raids of the foreigners (1170-1469), become utterly helpless and ruined, and lay like a doormat at the gate of India. Its people were physically and morally bankrupt. They had no sense of duty, no language, no inspiring religion of their own. They had lost all self-respect and fellow feelings. They were content to see their wives and childern being led away as so many cattle, without doing anything in defence of them*. Fermanand Grenard writes—"The Hindus were 'mere subjects of the second class.' That is to say, they were the ordinary tax-payers, who gave their gold when the officials called for it, and opened their mouths when he wished to spit therein."†

In this dark hour of India, 1469, when ignorance, with its twin-sister, superstition, was reigning rampant in the land, the spirit of divine love descended into the world in the person of our Saviour, Guru Nanak,

* Tazjiyat-ul-Amsar wa Tazjiyat-ul-Asar by Abdullah Wassaf
† Babar, First of the Moghals, *p*-161.

the first Master of the Sikhs. He was a Wycliffe without being an Oxfordon. He was a Luther without his violent outburst and without his 'slay and spare not' slogans. He was a John Huss, a Savonarola but without their tragic ends. He had the good qualities of each and much more besides. He toured as a pedestrian round the whole Asia and abroad to reform mankind. He never preached. His only argument was His own life, pure and simple, noble and virtuous that captured the world and the Master planted with His own hand the seedling of spiritual life in the soul of the disciple. He enjoined upon all men to live rightly and to abjure all fears and superstition. 'Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man' was practised by His disciples.

To purify the society—both Muslim and Hindu, of all corruptions Guru Nanak stood as one man against the hosts of darkness, unafraid of aught, blowing His horn of freedom, shaking all the old foundations of society. A new creation, a New Life!

Guru Nanak left the earth amid a chorus of song:

"The dead rose out of their graves
As they heard the song of Guru Nanak.
He healed us all by showering on us the sparks of Divine Fire!
The veils were lifted up, and the disciples went freely in and out of the door of death, in concourse of song with the Immortals!"

But His spiritual self, His very presence passed into the mind and body of the nine Masters, His successors

Angad, Guru Nanak's beloved disciple, received the sacred message and became the Second-Nanak, the apostle of His inspired faith in God. Guru Angad reduced to writing the accounts of the travels and hymns of the Master Nanak and thus made a beginning of the gift of literature to the people having at the same time given them an alphabet—Gurmukhi. To Guru Angad succeeded Amar Das.

Guru Amar Das carried on the purification of the society. Caste-restrictions and the curse of untouchability were abolished by making it a rule, that none could see the Master without dinning in His *langar* or free kitchen, where all, 'rich or poor, Brahmins or Sudras, dined together without any distinction'. The spirit of womenfolk, to play their part in the history with their husbands, was elevated by the Master by carrying on a vigorous crusade against the practice of infanticidism, sati* and purdah system, which were meant 'to hind their presence from the eyes of the Moghal conquerors, so that they should not be carried off.'†

During Guru Ram Das, the Fourth Master, the want of National Shrine, where all could meet from time to time, cultivate mutual love and understanding, and draw inspiration, was also felt. The Sikhs had increased in numbers and were beginning to group themselves together to become a people. Thus the 'Temple of Spirituality' at Amritsar was erected as a common shrine.

* A custom amongst Hindus by which a woman was forced to burn herself with her dead husband. C. H. Payne, *p.* 3.

† Hon'ble J. M. Kenworthy, India a warning, *p.* 84.

The next Master, fifth in the line, Guru Arjan, 'Who was a born poet, a practical philosopher, a powerful organizer and a great statesman,'* supplied what was wanting. The movement of service became most active and the Temple-Tank of Amritsar were completed. That meant a new stage in the growth of the Sikhs: they were becoming a propertied people, acquiring a collective religious and social sense.

Then Guru Arjan conceived the idea of enshrining Song as the Deity of the new Sikh Temple. Accordingly, the Master collected the hymns composed by His fore-runners and composed many more of His own. To this the Teacher added the writings of several saints, Hindu and Mohammedan, who were noted as well for their keen interest in the worldly affairs as for their high flights in the spiritual domain and called the collection 'Word of the Master'—later Sri Guru Granth Sahib—and placed it in the Hari Mandir as the book of the people.

Sat Guru's fame, and the growing wealth of His people, excited the enemy of the Emperor Jahangir.†

* Dr. G. C. Narang, *p.* 31.

† He suffered for His religion at the hands of Jahangir may be seen from the following words taken from the Emperor's own Tauzak: "So many of the simple-minded Hindus, nay, many foolish Moslems, too, had been fascinated by His ways and teachings. He was noised about as a great religious and worldly leader. They called Him Guru, and from all directions crowds of people would come to Him and express great devotion to Him. This busy traffic had been carried on for three or four generations. *For many years the thought had been presenting itself to my mind that either I should put an end to this traffic, or that He should be brought within the fold of Islam.*"

He was attacked too because of the heretical doctrines, detected by the orthodox, in the Granth Sahib. Guru Arjan was not to be moved. He was of the seed of the martyrs, and His doom was inevitable. He was put to unthinkable torture. Burning sands were poured on His bare body. He was compelled to sit on hot iron sheets. Besides this He bore the torture of burning and boiling water but all with unfailing firmness. His cause was righteous, and bravely He suffered for it. No martyr's lot was harder than Guru Arjan's and yet no body has sung of life more cheerfully than He. The disciples came to rescue the Guru but forbidding them He says, "Whatever Thou givest, I treat as happiness. Wherever Thou placest me, there shall be My heaven"

The last message the Master sent by the Sikhs to His son and successor, Guru Har Gobind, was one that sounded ominously, the change from peace to war: "Let Him sit armed on His Throne and keep up an army as best He can!" But Master's sword was struck neither in spirit of anger, hatred or aggressiveness, nor kingship or rule was the object of the conquest. It was all done for the weak must not be trampled under foot by the tyrannous. Justice was secured to the poor.

Guru Har Rai, the Seventh Master, devoted His time and attention to peaceful organisation. He kept 2200 soldiers but fought no battle as the Emperor Shah Jahan had seen, during the life-time of Guru Har Gobind, that it served no good purpose to make the Sikhs enemies. Guru Har Krishan, the next

Guru, soon after His accession at a tender age gave up His body.

The work of organisation and training for the future was continued by Guru Teg Bahadur, the Nineth Master. He was perpetually on tour, meeting His disciples in villages and in lonely jungle-huts, burning lamps of human hearts in memory of Guru Nanak, wherever the Master had been before. But the Mohammedan rulers smelt a growing menace in the rise of the Sikhs. Emperor Aurangzeb, determined to convert all men within his reach to Islam, adopted a cruel policy of extermination against the Sikhs, whom he considered to be a grave political religion. To kill a non-Muslim, a *'kafir'*, was represented as a religious duty. Even the English and Dutch residents in India were subjected to the same obnoxious impost.* To all's rescue came forward Guru Teg Bahadur and prepared the downtrodden people to raise their heads and achieve liberation. Soon the Master was summoned by the Emperor to Delhi, whither He went. He was kept there in prison and tortured under the orders of Aurangzeb. The Master was asked to embrace Islam or to die. He chose the latter and was beheaded at Delhi as He sat under the banyan tree reciting Japji. The tree still stands there—Shahid Ganj, to bear evidence to the fact that the Master through His martyrdom saved the freedom of religion and the lives of many martyrs.

Guru Gobind Singh acceded to Nanak's Throne,

* Talboy's Wheeler, a Short History of India, *p.* 177—178.

after His father, at the tender age of nine, but He continued the work. He gave all His soul to His people, brought new delight to them and scattered joy and light in abundance hitherto unknown. It was the Song of the Master dissolved in water to convert the Sikhs into Singhs—the Khalsa, the Pure One. It was the first day of Baisakh 1699. The Master prepared the Nectar of Knowledge Absolute in the Immortal Draught—the Amrit, for the first time and administred it to His 'Five Chosen' and addressed:

"Ye are the Sons of Nanak, the Creator's own, the Chosen Ones. I name ye the Khalsa. Ye are the disciples of Song, and ye shall be the saviours of man. Ye shall love man as man, making no distinction of caste or creed. Ye shall keep for ever this flame of light lit in you, unflickering, in deep meditation on the One Deathless Being. Ye shall bow your heads to your Master only. Ye shall never worship stock, stone, idol or tomb. Remember always in times of danger or difficulty the Master. Ye shall not pray each for himself, but for the whole Khalsa. In each of you the whole Brotherhood shall be incarnated. Ye are My sons, both in flesh and spirit."*

After this, the Master asked His 'Five Beloved Disciples' to prepare the Amrit and to anoint others as He had done. The Five obeyed. Nectar was prepared. It was the Master Himself who offered first of all to drink the Amrit from the hands of the

* Prof: Puran Singh, Ten Masters, *p*-106, 107.

Beloved Five. From Guru Gobind Rai His name was changed to Guru Gobind Singh. With the Master thousands of Sikhs were anointed on that day with the sacred Amrit and federated into a Brotherhood of the Khalsa. It was this Amrit that changed the docile, poor, fearful disciples into the leonine men of the new Khalsa: Saint Soldiers; who were taught to salute God and the Master with a naked sword swung high in air, and to practise the *simrin* of Wah-Guru He, thus, elevated the spirit and made others like Himself. 'Besides the tremendous change occuring inside the disciples, there outward appearance underwent a marvellous chage. They came to be regarded as models of physical beauty and stateliness of manner as much as they were respected for the truth and honesty of their character."*

Guru Gobind Singh, 'a lawgiver in the pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on His masnad, and a faqir in the society of the Khalsa'† could not escape from the vigilant eye of Aurangzeb. Battles were forced on the Divine Master. He took up sword and with His God intoxicated followers struck it, not for it was against Muslims, nor for winning empires, nor for conquering men, nor even for spreading religion and converting people by force but to champion in the spirit of nonchalance, the cause of the rights of free life for the individual

* Cunningham's History of the Sikhs, *p* 84; Elphinston's History of India, ii, *p*-564.

† Latif, History of the Punjab.

and the society without any personal motive or interest.

To liberate India*, Guru Gobind Singh in battles of Freedom, sacrificed His four sons, mere boys. The two elder attained martyrdom while fighting for mankind and the younger two, of nine and seven years in age, were arrested by the Emperor and promised release on condition that they embraced Islam. The boys refused to agree with the tyrant's wish. They were bricked alive. But to the last they stood with divine defiance in their eyes, saying, " Do thy business, tyrant; we are happy." Thus they courted and played with death as willingly and affectionately as moths court and play with the flames of light.

Ever cheerful Master came to know this but not to indulge in lamentations. He rather exclaimed: "Glory to Thee, Divine Father: that my sons have been accepted a sacrifice for Thy truth and religion". He still battled on till the year 1708. Again, while still His wounds from the last battle He had fought were only half healed, He took up a mighty bow to try His strength. His blood burst out afresh. With His last breath, the Master left the Beloved Book, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the living spirit of Ten Masters, as His successor with the Sikhs.

How, with the establishment of the Khalsa Commonwealth, the fall of the Moghal Empire was

* A Muslim poet, Bulleh Shah says, "*agar na hote Guru Gobind Singh, sunat hoti sab ki*" meaning

But for Guru Gobind Singh all would have been circumcised.'

brought about will become more evident by the hints of the following history of the Sikhs given in the succeeding pages. India which had become somnolent by centuries of foreign rule rose from its slumber and began to strike under him. In the first time in the history of the Punjab, under the leadership of the Khalsa, the stream of conquest began to move westward, and India the downtrodden, became India, the conqueror. Such was the extraordinary impetus which the Gurus and His Khalsa brought to bear on the masses of the Punjab.

Have seen all places but there is none like thee,

Thou art founded by the Creator Himself,
therefore thou art beautiful ;

Around thee—the beautiful Ramdas Pur—the population will be dense and immense.

Nanak says, all the evils will be washed away by bathing in the Tank of Ram Das.

GURU ARJAN

*My earliest acquaintance with the Punjabees, and especially the Sikhs, begins with the Gurdwaras. As my father was a lover of the Guru Granth Sahib, he knew many verses from that Holy Book by heart and used to recite them. He used to visit Hari Mandir when he stayed at Amritsar and I used to accompany him. The great love of my father for Sikhism inspired me also to read its Sacred Scripture and to study its creed and history of the Sikhs. I have tried to acquaint my people with the mission of Guru Nanak. Through sacrifice, travail and persecution it has become a great religion. The Sikh Religion is meant for the whole humanity and is not at all sectarian.*

*RABINDRA NATH TAGORE*



# AMRITSAR

The Punjab and its natives owe much to the Sikh Gurus for the origin of many towns in this province founded as common centres of religion and commerce. Their locality had some peculiarity. Either the town was located on a predominantly high position to give it a strategic advantage or in the centre of a fertile tract of land to attract a large number of cultivators or a Trunk Road or by the side of a river with the same object in view. Sri Guru Nanak Dev founded Kartar Pur, while His successor Sat Guru Angad Dev made Khadur Sahib so popular. The Third Master, Guru Amar Das made Goindwal His headquarters whereas Guru Ram Das transformed a thick forest into a flourishing city, Amritsar. Sri Guru Arjan Dev left for His people Tarn Taran, 'to swim across the Sea of Ignorance to save many a drowning soul.' Out-of-the way and inaccessible place was made renowned by Baba Gurditta, son of the Sixth Master, as Kiratpur. Guru Teg Bahadur founded Anandpur, 'the City of Immortal Bliss.'

In the times immemorial the land, where the city of Golden Temple is seen flourishing today, was simply covered with a thick secluded forest with a pool amidst it. It lay entirely shut off from the bustle of the outside world and offered to devotees

of God peace and quietness so necessary for worship. So *Rishis*, *Munis* and *Yogis** of old frequently visited the place which had then become more renowned as the best retreat for contemplative minds and for those who lived retired from the world. As time passed on the place fell into comparative oblivion.

In the period of Lord Buddha the place once more attained an importance. The Great Teacher while passing through the country is said to have stopped for a while at the site of the pool and observed, "The spot is best for the Bhikhshus to obtain their Nirvana, and is far superior in that respect to other places so far visited but it must have time for its celebrity." Accordingly it became a hermitage for Buddhist Bhikhshus and ascetics, who would meditate on 'the jewel in the lotus.' How long this continued one cannot say. But due to lapse of time and great revolution, which had occured in the country, the dawn of the Sikh History found it once more a thick deserted forest, owned by the adjoining villages—Tung, Sultanwind, Gumtala and Gulwali.

* Who practises *yoga*—the psycho-physical discipline practised by the Hindus for liberation or salvation.

Guru Nának, the founder of the Sikh Religion, frequented this place more than once. Going to Sultanwind in 1502, with His companion Bhai* Mardana†, the Master came across this land for the first time and predicted the holiness and importance reserved for it in after ages.‡ Many a time afterwards the Guru accompanied by Bhai Lehna came to sanctify this place§

Mohd. Latif describes the visit of Guru Nanak at this place as follows:

* Precious to the Sikhs is the word *Bhai*. It means 'brother'. The Guru has taught the sacred truth of Brotherhood. Hence it is that every member of the Sikh Community is a *bhai* ; all are bhais or brothers, whether kings or warriors, preachers or students.

† Bhai Mardana was Guru Nanak's rebec-player and a companion with all the wit and humour of a Punjabi Ministrel. He first met Guru Nanak at the time of the latter's marriage. Mardana came and asked the bridegroom for a gift. The Master gave him the gift of Divine Song and said, " Wait till I call you." Mardana was called, and he never left the presence of the " Bridegroom." Born in 1459 he died in November 1534 and his children took his place in the service of the Guru.

‡ Tawarikh Khalsa, *p*-644.

§ Suraj Parkash, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar *p*-2081. foot note.

"One day Nanak, becoming thirsty, asked Budha* who was attending his cattle near by to bring some water in a vessel from a tank closeby. Budha said, 'there was a tank but it was dry'. Nanak said, "Go and see; the tank is not dry." Budha went, and to his astonishment saw that the tank was full of water, although it had not a drop in the morning. He brought water for Nanak and became His disciple. At this place Guru Arjan constructed a new tank and called it Amritsar or the Water of Immortality."†

The sanctity of the place was talked by Guru Angad to His beloved-disciple and successor Guru Amar Das,‡ Who sent Bhai Jetha, the future Fourth Nanak Guru Ram Das, to this place to found a common centre of commerce and spirituality. He came here in 1570 and acquired a site of 250 acres

* Bhai Budha was born in 1506 in the village, Kathu Nangal. While a lad of twelve he received the Divine Gift of Nam from Guru Nanak. After this he always took pleasure in being serviceable to the Guru. Bhai Budha was of humble birth but by his nobility, purity and godliness he became the most trusted and the most respected amongst the Sikhs. So much so that during his life time he used to instal Gurus—the 2nd to the 6th—to the Gaddi.

Living on a few grassy acres near Amritsar with a few cows grazing by his side quietly, Bhai Budha or the Brother Ancient lived self-closed, immersed wholly in the Guru to ripe old age and died blessed by the Master in 1631.

† History of the Punjab, p-247.

‡ Suraj Parkash, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, p-2088 foot note.

from the owners,* and laid down the foundation of a village by the name of 'Guru ka Chak.' According

*Khalsa Tawarikh.

Writers err in mentioning that Amritsar was founded on the part of the gift of land made by the Emperor Akbar to the Guru. No doubt the Emperor came to pay homage to the Master so often, and twice or thrice he himself offered the grant of twelve villages to the Master but ever it was declined (Malcolm) and the principle of Guru Nanak that *Gurn-ka-Langar* and other Sikh institutions should be supported by the hard-earned money of the disciples, was maintained.

Babar the first Moghal Emperor, met Guru Nanak among the captives after Saidpur was razed to the ground. The would-be Emperor of India then saw in His presence the true Empire of Pure Beauty and asked Him to accept a present from him. "I need nothing from you" said the Guru: "set at liberty, if you please, these people, who have been wantonly oppressed." Guru Nanak accepted nothing for himself rather blessed the Emperor with rule of India for seven generations.

Babar's son, Emperor Humayon, came to the Second Nanak. Emperor Akbar, the third in line, came to Guru Amar Das in 1565. Having seen a large number of people fed from Guru's kitchen the Emperor offered to the Guru a large estate for the Service of Bread. The Master declined this offer and said, "I have already obtained enough from my Creator. The people are my lands and estates. Enough that daily we get our bread from God; and we do not think of the morrow. Enough that we are of the Poor, and think of the Beloved." The Emperor pressed on the Guru the acceptance of several villages but the Guru was firm in His refusal.



AKBAR THE GREAT.

Here also the writers err when they say that this grant of

to His Master's instructions, to enlarge the pool into a great tank, the work of excavation was

12 villages was granted to Bibi Bhani, the daughter of the Guru, and this is an estate that later on was converted into a flourishing colony by Guru Ram Das. How could it be possible for the Guru to accept the estate for His daughter that was refused by Him for Free Kitchen which was meant for others ?

Secondly, the jagir of villages surrounding Jhabal, 12 miles to the South from Amritsar, was offered and not the land of Amritsar.

Khalsa Tawarikh mentions another visit of Akbar but now to Guru Ram Das, in 1579. The same offer was again made to the Master after presenting 101 gold *mohars*. The gold *mohars* were distributed to the poor on the spot and the offer of the jagir refused with the same remarks as the Third Master had done.

According to Sikh Religion by Macauliff, Khalsa Tract Society, Tract No: 601 and others Akbar again visited the Guru in 1606. Now the Emperor met Guru Arjan and was charmed with His saintly beauty. He was so pleased with the imposing and beautiful Amritsar, which the Guru had constructed, and the delightful melodies to which the hymns of the Gurus had been set, that words failed him to express his gratification. He called himself Guru's slave and wished to make a contribution towards the upkeep of the Golden Temple. But the offer was declined on the ground that the Temple must be supported by the people. As the Emperor insisted on doing something for the Guru before he left the Golden Temple Arjan said, "There is a severe famine in the country, and it would be best if thy Imperial visit were to be marked by the remission of this year's land revenue to the poor farmers." Akbar gave orders accordingly.

From all this, it is evident, that never was such estate or jagir accepted by the Sikh Gurus from Akbar but Guru Ram Das had bought this land from the land-owners to found Amritsar. Whenever any town was founded by Sikh Gurus the site was invariably purchased from the owners.

In this matter all that Akbar did was that he ordered a large plot of land round this Sikh centre of Spiritual Humanity to be made revenue-free.

commenced by Guru Ram Das* in 1573. The work was temporarily abandoned after a year due to the departure from this planet of Guru Amar Das.

In 1577, the work was undertaken again by Guru Ram Das who then made 'Guru ka Chak' His headquarters and made it a new colony of disciples. Bhai Salo, a devotee of the Master with the efforts of his various friends and influential relatives like Bhais Chandar Bhan and Rup Ram brought together the people of all trades from the neighbouring villages and distant towns and had them settled in Guru ka Chak, which was then a collection of squalid huts, to make it an ever-growing centre for the trade and industry besides the centre of spirituality. Thus the Chak grew into a small town called Ram Das Pur, after the name of Guru Ram Das, also known as Amritsar after the name of the Tank.

Mohd. Latif paying a tribute to the Guru writes:

"In founding the town of Amritsar at a central

* The author of 'Mahma Parkash' writes that the excavation of this Tank was undertaken by Guru Amar Das. The statement is not tenable when we compare it with 'Wars of Bhai Gurdasji' the contemporary of Guru Ram Das, who writes that this all was done by Guru Ram Das.

Guru Amar Das states in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (p-1412) "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰੁ ਸਿਫਤੀ ਦਾ ਘਰੁ" *i.e.*, Amritsar is the home of virtues. So it is evident that the 'Tank of Immortality' better known as Amritsar, after which the town was named, was excavated during the Guruship of the Divine Master Amar Das. And this tallies with the dates given in this book.

In short the modern history of Amritsar commences with the First Master whereas the Temple and Tank were completed by Guru Arjan Dev ji.

spot, the Guru laid the foundation of the future greatness of the Sikhs as a nation, for they were enabled now to rally at a common place of worship, conveniently situated, both as regards distance and fertility of the soil. Peaceful in mind and gentle in their behaviour, following yet the mild and pure tenets laid down by their first leader, they learnt to write together and to foster and engender those feelings of brotherly love which tendered to strengthen the national tie, and paved the way to the formation of a commonwealth on true patriotic principles".*

Sri Guru Arjan Dev followed Sri Guru Ram Das in 1638 and continued the work left undone by the Fourth Master to completion.† People flocked from far and near and partook enthusiastically in the labour of love. They worked to complete the Tank with such desparate devotion and unsparing energy,

* History of the Punjab, *p*-253.

† Lord Buddha denounced the world but ascetism and renunciation of the world or retirement to forests was not needed for salvation according to the Sikh Gurus. They believed in 'all that exists is His own image' and a true man was he who performed his household duties to the best of his ability, was undaunted by all sorts of difficulties, and was purged of his conciet through selfless service to others. So the traders of various sects were invited to ply their callings at Guru-ka-Chak and were taught to practice pure and true life which was the only recommendation for a Man. What a happy contrast with the Teachers of other faiths advocating belief in them for remission of sins.

Besides this Guru's providing a mosque and a mandir for Muslim and Hindu citizens of Guru-ka-Chak at His own cost provides another ventilation of His magnanimous mind for religious toleration for His subjects.

that Guru Arjan, when saw the state of their bodies, shed tears and said that as the tank had been constructed by such devout and sincere disciples, all sins should be removed and desires fulfilled by bathing in it and duly worshiping God :

He who batheth herein, having meditated on his God.
Shall be completely restored to health.
He who batheth in the Tank of Saints
Shall obtain Salvation.
He who meditateth on God's name
Shall not die or suffer migration.

On completion of the Tank of Immortality it was devised by the Master to erect the 'Temple of Spirituality' amidst it. Great religious ceremony was observed on 1st Magh, 1645 sambat (January 1589) and Guru Arjan Himself* laid the foundation stone of the Great Temple. The master mason, who was of the earth-earthy, finding the brick laid by the Master not in plumb-line moved it to set it right. The Divine Master saw all this and predicted, "Master mason! you have moved the original brick. The Temple shall be rebuilt in the times to come." But the work was not discontinued. All laboured hard to complete the new institution of *Hari Kirtan.*

When the plinth of the Temple was being laid, some Sikhs represented to the Master in an impulse of natural pride: "The Temple, Sire, should be built higher than all other buildings". But explain-

* Encyclopædia of Sikh Literature, *p*-288; Sikh Religion Vol. III. *p*-10; Khalsa Tract Society, Tract No: 596, *p*-14; Suraj Parkash, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, *p*-1856.

ing an abiding symbol of Sikh humility came Divine fermented answer: "What is low and humble shall be exalted by Him. The branches of a fruit-laden tree, bend low to the earth. By whatever path thou desireth to approach thou shalt descend and in thy humility thou shalt attain Hari Mandir. This shall be the lowest of the edifices; for lowly shall be honoured by Him".*

In 1601 the edifice of the Temple was completed and sanctified by Guru Arjan by His life-giving hymns, which He sang every morning and evening in accompaniment with *saranda*. Lovely music flowed from under the dome, until it was absorbed and reabsorbed by the walls and waters of the lake outside, which has, therefore, become literally a Temple of Spirituality amidst the Tank of Immortality. But for all this the Divine Teacher thanks the Almighty Lord in the following words:

God Himself did come;
He stood up to the work
Of His *bhaktas.*
On this beautiful spot,
In this beautiful Temple-Tank
He poured Himself
His nectarous water!

Granth Sahib was compiled by Satguru Arjan and enshrined in the Temple in 1604, (*Bhadron Sudi* 1, 1661 *Sambat*) to keep up the flow of *Nam.* Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Temple are not two, but indissolubly one, even as are the body and the

* M. A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol. III, *p*-9.

soul. Bhai Budha, the famous apostle, was appointed the first *Granthi*, the reader of the Holy Scripture.*

The service of the Master created envy in many a heart. One of them was Prithi Chand, the elder brother of the Fifth Master. He regarded as an injury inflicted on him by his father's withholding from him the Throne of Nanak, for which the best disciple was ever selected. Prithi Chand made many efforts to convince the Sikhs coming to Amritsar that he was the real Guru. But who had no spiritual peace, consolation, truth, love and devotion could not communicate these gifts and virtues to others. So the Sikh hearts withered and pined like a lotus without the Sun. Through the vigilance of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Budha the truth was revealed to the disciples. Thus the plans of Prithi Chand were frustrated. He left Amritsar and at Hehar in Lahore District he built a similar place of worship as his younger brother, the True Master, had done. It lacked the Divine Touch. It was never worshipped and fell to ruins. Similar efforts by others were subsequently made to build places of worship after

* Sri Guru Granth Sahib forms a great landmark in the religious history of the world in as much as it contains besides the hymns of the Sikh Gurus, the religious songs of the great teachers like Kabir of Benaras, Nam Dev and Trilochan of Maharashtra, Farid of Pak Pattan, Dhanna of Raj-Putana and Jai Dev of Bengal. There was no distinction of caste, creed, rank or station but the soul of the love-songs was in sight. All the songs were compiled and the final seal was put so that nothing could be added or altered thereafter. Thus Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Scripture of not the Sikhs only but of the whole *Bharatvarsha*, India

the style of the Golden Temple at Batala, at Haran Munara in Sheikhupura District and other places. There was absence of the megnatic touch and charm. So none cared for these. In most of these places the tanks built at heavy expenses are dry forsaken ponds, while the Golden Temple stands out shedding forth rays of peace and etherial joy of which a soul is always desirous.

Guru Har Gobind, the Sixth Nanak, made an important addition by building Akal Takht in the viscinity of the Golden Temple. Its importance is related somewhere else in these pages. But Master's wars against the tyranny of the atrocious Government were responsible for the removal of His headquarters from Amritsar. The Warrior Saint wished that this Shrine should not be made a zone of war but should continue to be a centre of worship. The Temple's charge was entrusted to highly reverend Sikhs like Bhai Budha, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Siddu and others. The Seventh and Eighth Gurus did not visit Amritsar at all.

Guru Teg Bahadur, the Ninth-Nanak, paid a visit to Hari Mandir in 1664 with Bhai Makhan Shah and other disciples. Thara Sahib, a Gurdwara, only a few paces to the north of Akal Takht, commemorates the site where the Master stayed and watered the seeds of *Nam* sown in His people by the previous Masters.

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Nanak, being engaged in continuous wars against tyranny of the Moghal Emperors and the Hill Rajas, very seldom

came beyond Satluj. The Master at the time of His passing away ordained that the spiritual leadership of the Sikhs would be hereafter vested in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the general body of the Khalsa*. So to a Sikh now Guru Granth Sahib was Nanak-Gobind Singh. Hence the Sikhs do not give such a designation of 'Guru' even to the most revered of their holy men, their highest religious title being "*Bhai*", literally "brother", but corresponding with the English term "elder".

* The Master said :—
"So does the Akal Purusha ordain,
The Word is Master now—
The shabd of Nam, the 'Guru Granth'
All Khalsa should seek the Master in His Word,
And bow to 'Guru Granth' as my successor."

# PERSECUTION OF THE SIKHS

Banda Bahadur

Banda Bahadur,* after various victories over the Moghals came to pay homage to the Temple in 1713. Some people came forward with various claims of Gurushipp. So at this time the elders of the Sikh Community displayed a great foresight and statesmanship by placing Guru Granth Sahib in the Temple once again, as that placed by the Fifth Master had been removed, so that the spiritual symbol should always be

* Banda Bahadur, known as Lachhman Dev in his boyhood, was born on the 27th October, 1670 at Rajauri in the Punchh District of Western Kashmir but J. D. Cunningham followed by Major Brown (India Tracts ii. 9) says that he was born in Jullundur Doab. He was fond of shooting and hunting. But a a sight of dying doe, shot by him, called forth his renunciation of the world. He acquired the science of Yoga and incantations ; and finally settled on the bank of the river Godavari, in the Deccan.

It was here that Guru Gobind Singh wrought an unimaginable change in a twinkling in the life of this austere hermit and transformed him into Banda, a slave or a man of His. The Master administered to him the Amrit of the Khalsa and gave him the name of Gur Bakhash Singh (see History of the Punjab by Kanhaya Lal *p*-56, by Mohd. Latif *p*-294 ; History of the Sikhs by C. H. Payne, J. D. Cunningham, W. L. M'Gregor, Malcolm, owther, Macauliffe, Dr. G. C. Narang and others). After this conversion the Master deputed Bhai Gur Bakhash Singh, well known as Banda Bahadur, along with His Sikhs to bring all the oppressors and tyrants to book irrespective of their being Imperial Mohammadan commanders or Hill Rajas.

found there with the temporal one to instruct the people in the path of salvation. Since then this practice has been followed constantly.

More than once came Banda to serve his Master's Temple. But his victories over the Imperial forces caused Bahadur Shah, the Emperor, to come to Lahore where he died in 1712. Farrukh Siyar became the Emperor and succeeded in arresting Banda Bahadur, who died like a true Sikh and a gallant warrior of Guru Gobind Singh.

The incident of Banda's death is narrated in 'Early records of British India' *p*-180 as follows:—

Arrests and massacre of the Sikhs at Delhi

The great rebel Banda, the Sikh who has been for these twenty years so troublesome in the province of Lahore, is at length taken with all his family and attendance by the Subedar or Viceroy, of that province. Some days ago they entered the city laden with fetters, his whole attendance which were left alive being about 780, all severally mounted on camels, which were sent out of the city for that purpose, besides 2,000 heads stuck upon poles, being those who died by the sword in the battle. He was carried into the presence of the King and from thence to a close prison. He at present has his life prolonged with most of his officers, in hope to get an account of his treasure in several parts of his kingdom, and of those that assisted him, when afterwards he will be executed for the rest. There are one hundred each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one has apostatised from the new formed religion.* So much so, "They even clamoured

* From a letter written by an eye-witness, John Sermon, the English Ambassador, to the then Governor of Bengal.

for priority of martyrdom."*

Cunningham in his history of the Sikhs† says, "A hundred Sikhs were put to death daily, contending among themselves for priority of martyrdom, and on the eighth day Banda himself was arraigned before his judges. His son was placed before his knees, a knife was put into his hands, and he was required to take the life of his child. He did so, silent and unmoved; his own flesh was then torn with red-hot pincers, and amid those torments he expired."

Bhai Mani Singh

With the death of Banda Bahadur the persecution of the Sikhs commenced. Unfortunately minor differences arose amongst the Sikhs at Amritsar at that time. Learning this Bhai Mani Singh, the most learned Sikh of the time, was deputed by Mata Sundri‡ in 1721 to quash this dispute and take charge of the Temple. From that time Bhai Mani Singh began to live at Amritsar, where he daily worked in the Durbar, and read the holy hymns of the Master to the people. The Singhs were not allowed to stop there; but his devotion and learning drew round him a vast multitude of the common Hindus and Muslims. And though this Shrine of the Khalsa rankled like a thorn in the eyes of the Muslim Governors, yet his quiet behaviour and peaceful deportment had won their assurance. Anyhow if any perverted, prejudiced or

* Latif, History of the Punjab. Another Mohammadan also writes: "It is singular, that these people not only behaved firmly during the execution, but they would dispute and wrangle with each other as to who should suffer first; and they made interest with the executioner to obtain the preference (Malcolm).

†. p-132; Elphinston's sketch, p-378; Sairul-Mutakhrin.

‡ Mata Sundri was Guru Gobind Singh's widow.

avaricious person worried him in his hymnal devotion or vexed any one of the frequenters of the Durbar, he would doff him off with surest words or with sweeter still money.

Under these circumstances the governor of Lahore felt that the progress of the Khalsa could, in no way, be checked. The Sikhs were really raised by the Almighty from among the birds to swallow the eagles. Then he proposed an annual jagir of Rs. 1,00,000 and sent a title of Nawab, with a precious robe of honour for the Singhs, and a jagir of 19 villages for Guru ka Chak,* to be on friendly terms with the Khalsa. The Imperial mandate was sent to the Khalsa at Amritsar in April 1733, through Bhai Subeg Singh.† The Khalsa were holding a *diwan* at Akal Takht. They refused to accept anything sent by the Emperor, as they did not like to give up the independent empire by submitting to the Moghals. The messenger politely argued for the acceptance of this all. But none would accept it for himself, and it was contemptuously thrown from one to another. Bhai Kapur Singh was then

* Panth Parkash, Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangu, *p*·257.

† Bhai Subeg Singh was one of the courtiers of Governor of Lahore. Whenever any question touching Sikhism arose, he was selected as an advocate. He had a son name Sabaj Singh. Some harsh expression passed between the young boy and his Muslim tutor while having religious discussion. The report was lodged with the Governor, who apprehended both the son and the father. Either they should embrace Islam or the both clenched to the wheel and tortured to death "was the order given. The brave soldiers preferred the latter. There was no sorrow. There was the inner joy blossoming up in the fullness of a willing death.

fanning the assembly in the *diwan* and all unanimously dressed him with the imperial robe and proclaimed him Nawab. In all humility Kapur Singh accepted this honour bestowed upon him by the Khalsa with a condition that he would pass his days in the same service of the Panth which eventually elevated him to the leadership of the Khalsa. Mohd. Latif remarks about him, who later founded the State of Kapurthala, that "he was undoubtedly the most distinguished of the Sikh leaders who paved the way for the greatness of the nation as an independent ruling power". Thus the treaty was formed, due to which most of the Sikhs engaged themselves in agriculture, trade and other peaceful occupations. The days passed in harmony and the perpetual Divine music and worship was carried on in the Temple.

Hardly two or three years had passed when the administration changed its hands. Zakaria Khan was appointed the governor of Lahore. On seeing the Sikhs settled the treaty was broken by the governor and the jagirs granted to the Sikhs confiscated. This deceit of the Moghals once again created bitterness in the Sikh hearts against the rulers. The game became serious when Bhai Mani Singh devised to celebrate Diwali festival at Amritsar. He undertook to pay a heavy subsidy of Rs. 5000 to Zakaria Khan, the Viceroy of Lahore, if the Sikhs were allowed to go to the Temple unmolested. The wary Moghals played a treacherous game and began to murder and persecute the pilgrims as they approached

the Temple. Consequently there was a very poor attendance at the fair* resulting in meagre offering of money at the Temple. Bhai Mani Singh was unable to pay subsidy and was condemned to death. He was offered the usual alternative of Islam. But he stoutly refused to barter his religion. So in 1738 his body was cut to pieces, limb by limb and joint by joint.

The saint passed away but this widened the gulf running between Muslims and Non-Muslims. A new proposal was brought forth. The Moulvis and Qazis advised the Governor of Lahore to prevent the Sikhs from bathing and drinking the Water of Life in the Sacred Tank at Amritsar, if he wanted to destroy the opponent power and extirpate the race of the Sikhs.† Accordingly a detachment of soldiers was cantoned to prevent the Sikhs from approaching their National Shrine. Notwithstanding all the obstructions the Sikhs continued to bathe in the Tank though in disguise.

* In 1617 Guru Har Gobind's release from Gwalior fort was ordered. The Master would not go unless the Emperor agreed to set all prisoners in the fort at liberty. The Emperor gave way and all the Raja prisoners were released on the personal security of the Guru. Therefrom the Master gets the name "Bandi Chhor" —the great deliverer, who cuts the fetters of the prisoner's feet and sets them free. To commemorate this liberality Diwali festival is celebrated on the corresponding day. The other fair held is Baisakhi in April. It was held for the first time in the time of Guru Amar Das. This is also the birth-day of the Khalsa—when they were regularly administered Amrit by the Tenth Master for the first time. (*Encyclopædia of Sikh literature*).

† Bhai Rattan Singh, Panth Parkash.

Massa Ranghar*

*Dissatisfied with previous management the Moghal Governor established a police-post and a Civil Court there in 1740.* The Temple, meant for imparting the Divine Music was profaned by the presence of the Muslim officers holding nautch-parties. This could not be relished by the Sikhs, who though hunted then like wild beasts yet managed to revenge the insult. Bhais Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh came from Bikaner, disguised as peasents with bags full of coins as revenue, in the presence of Massa Ranghar, the officer incharge. The flashing swords of the two undaunted lions fell on necks of Massa Ranghar and his assistants instead of revenue. The Muslim soldiers present there were too astonished to offer any resistance or capture the brave Sikhs, who fled back with the decapitated head of the officer. This caused the persecution of the Sikhs to commence with right earnest. The officals became still more repressive and the Sikhs were forced to conceal them in jungles and forsaken hills. But

> Cowards die many times before their deaths,
> The valiant never taste of death but once.
>
> (*Shakespeare*)

The Temple was locked. Sentinals were placed at its entrance with very strict orders and no one was allowed admission to it. One who attempted was to be crowned with martyrdom. But the fire of Sikh faith burnt clear and strong with the severity

* Ranghar is a term applied to the Rajputs who have become Muhammadans.

of their suffering. A visit to their National Shrine was more dear to them than their own lives. So some performed this pilgrimage in disguise but in general, according to a contemporary Mohammadan author, the bands of Sikh horsemen were seen at dawn riding at full gallop, towards "their favourite Shrine of Devotion, running the gauntlet of the Mohammadan troops. They were often slain in making this attempt, and sometimes taken prisoners; but they used, on such occasions, to seek, instead of avoiding, the crown of martyrdom"; and the same authority states that "an instance was never known of a Sikh, taken in his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith."* The bands were formed by sending a message round the distant villages, "Who will ride to-night?"—the watchword for a dash to be made to bathe in the Sacred Tank.

This all was done because " a proclamation was issued by the Lahore Viceroy ordering a general massacre of the long haired Singhas (Lions) wherever found. They were hunted like wild beasts, a price being placed on their heads; thousands were put to death, refusing pardon on condition of renouncing their faith and cutting their hair. They were looked as martyrs of the cause, but despite all, the Khalsa grew and increased in boldness."†

Afgans.

At this time Nadir Shah, the king of Persia, invaded India. Finding this unrest the Sikhs came out of their distant and

* The author is quoted but not named by Malcolm, Sketch, p-88; History of the Sikhs, Sir J. H. Gordon, p 59.

† History of the Sikhs, Gordon, p-59.

hidden abodes to wreak vengeance upon cruel and unjust officers. They openly visited the Holy Tank at Amritsar and held councils there. Oppressed Hindus often came at Akal Takht to seek their aid and the ungrudging help rendered by these Sikhs was proverbial. This liberty was short-lived. The old fate revived with the retirement of Nadir Shah, who was soon after assassinated and Ahmad Shah Abdali was crowned king of Kandhar. He had changed the name of his tribe from Abdali to Durrani, by which name it has ever since been known.

Anxious to found an Empire Abdali marched to India with his Afgan forces, Mohd Latif writes:

"*The invasion of Abdali was a matter of all absorbing interest, upon which the attention of the whole empire was concentrated and it afforded the ever vigilant Sikhs a favourable opportunity of springing up in numbers and renewing their acts of depredation.†

* History of the Punjab 1891, *p*-220.

† To punish the cruel and unjust was considered an act of depredation by the author. Qazi Nur Mohd, who accompanied Abdali, writes in his Jang Nama:—

"They never pounce upon the emasculated or the fleeing one's.
It may be a maid-servant or master, one of fair sex is never robbed.
These dogs are neither loose in character, nor take to thefts
nor enjoy acts of depredation. Such are these humiliated ones.
They never befriend the thieves or evil-persons."

In the end Qazi realises and says, 'call not the dogs but the lions, they are brave."

The Sikhs, who laid their lives to fight for the country against the invaders, cannot be accused of this. Also see Forster's Travels.

They again began to pay visits to the holy Tank and Shrines at Amritsar, had even the audacity to throw up a fort of mud, which they called Ram Rouni, which is now called Ram Garh, in the vicinity of Amritsar. Jassa Singh, the Kalal, one of their leaders, rose into power and ventured to proclaim that the "Dal" of the "Khalsa" or the army of the theocracy of the Singhs would be the new power that should govern the state."



ABDALI.

Abdali ransacked the whole country. Challenging the honour of India he was going back to Kabul carrying with him the young Indian girls.* The Sikhs came to their rescue and Abdali had to yield and retreated without them, leaving behind Mir Mannu for the Sikhs. So "firmly established in his authority,

* The following is one of the many instances from History of the Punjab by Mohd. Latif—*p*-317.

'Once when Ahmad Shah was returning to Kabul, he took with him a body of two thousand Hindu women from the Punjab to serve as slave-girls for his countrymen. Prompted by a sense of duty of his countrymen, S. Jassa Singh fell on the Shah's troops one night and rescued the innocent creatures from the clutches of the hardy Afghans. He then liberally provided them with money and sent them all under proper escort to their respective homes'. Also see Sikh Martyrs (Ganesh & Co., Madras) *p*-184.

Mir Mannu (the then Governor of Lahore) considered the best mode of chastising the Sikhs. His first act was to storm the fort of Ram Rouni, which he captured and reduced. He then sanctioned detachments of troops in all parts infested by the Sikhs with stringent orders to shave their heads and beards wherever they might be found. These measures, being vigorously enforced, inspired public confidence, checked the progress of Sikhs proselytism and compelled the votaries of the Guru to conceal themselves in the mountains and jungles. Mir Manna issued strict orders to hill-rajas to seize the Sikhs and send them in irons to Lahore. These orders were duly obeyed and hundreds of Sikhs were brought daily to Lahore and butchered at the Nakhas outside the Delhi Gate, in sight of multitudes of spectators. The young Mannu became an irreconcilable foe of the Sikhs, and was determined to extirpate the nation."* But the ever cheerful Sikhs were not dejected. They had elevated spirits and they sang while going to their Holy Temple:—

"We are the grass,
And Mannu the sickle;
The more he cuts us,
The more we grow".

Several scuffles took place near the Temple and the faithful gladly sacrificed their lives. The places of their burial are now marked as "Shahid Ganj". Harrowing tales are described how the Afghan rulers behaved so as to terrify the coming pilgrims. Some-

* Latif, History of the Punjab. *pp.* 220, 221, and Browne India Tracts, *ii.*—*p*-16.

times the dead bodies were hung from the Temple-Gate or numerous pyramids made before the Temple from the heads of those who had suffered decapitation.* Even hundreds of Sikh women, on their way to the Temple, were arrested by the then Government officials. The women were kept on starvation diet: but they would not renounce their faith. "God will shield us," they said, and as they went on grinding corn in the prison-house of Lahore they sang the songs of the Master. Their babies were killed in their presence; they themselves were threatened with execution, but they would not renounce their faith.

Mir Mannu died in 1752. His widow succeeded in producing the acknowledgement of her infant son as governor under her own guardianship, but he was removed by Adina Beg. Then the Punjab remained under his nominal rule for a time until Ahmad Shah again marched to Lahore and made it his own. The Durrani King left for Delhi in 1756 leaving his son, Taimur, as Governor of Lahore, with orders to take vengeance on the Sikhs of the past. So his first object was to thoroughly disperse the insurgent Sikhs and pull down their Great Temple and fill up the Sacred Tank.† This action provoked the whole race of the Sikhs, who united under two able leaders, both called Bhai Jassa Singh, drove out the invader and occupied Lahore and Amritsar. In this temporary reign of 1758 the disciple restored the Temple and

* Mohd. Latif, History of the Punjab *p*-284.

† J. D. Cunningham, History of the Sikhs (1904), *p*-146, and Malcolm, Sketch, *pp*-93, 94.

the Tank. The first Sikh Coin was also struck at this time, bearing the inscription in Persian meaning, "By the grace of God, the coin is struck in the world, Jassa Singh having captured the country of Ahmad."*

Much chagrined at the growth of the Sikhs Ahmad Shah, the Durrani Monarch, invaded the Punjab in 1762, the 6th time, in order to reduce the Sikhs to submission†. Severe defeat was given to the Sikhs in the battle at Kup Rahira in which very large number of them were killed. The event is still remembered as *Ghallughara*. Under the impression that with the disappearance of their National Shrine the power of the Sikhs would vanish, Ahmad Shah, while going back to Kabul made a big assault upon Amritsar. 'He gratified his own resentment,' and indulged the savage bigotry of his followers by destroying the renewed Temples of Amritsar, by polluting the Tank with slaughtered cows, by encasing numerous pyramids with the heads of decapitated Sikhs and by cleansing the walls of desecrated mosques with the blood of his infidel enemies.‡

This action eventually caused Monarch's death. It is stated that when Abdali was engaged in blowing up the Temple, a missile from the blown-up edifice

* The Punjab as a sovereign state, Gulshan Rai. *p*-240, Browne, Tracts ; ii, *p*-19 ; Malcolm, Sketch, *pp*-93,94 ; Elphinstone, Kabul, ii, *p*-289 ; and Murray, Ranjit Singh, *p*-15.

† Gulshan Rai, History of India, *p*-407.

‡ Sketch of the Sikhs, Malcolm, *p*-98 ; History of the Sikhs, J. D. Cunningham, *p*-152; Forster' Travels, i, *p*-320 ; Murray, Ranjit Singh, *p*-25 and Punjab District Gazetteers Vol. XXA 1914; *p*-16.

struck the Monarch on his head. The wound subsequently turned into a cancer and gave him an excruciating pain until he died of it in June 1773, in the fiftieth year of his age.*

Wise men ne'er sit and wait their loss,
But cheerly seek how to redress their arms.
(*Shakespeare*).

The Sikhs, on hearing this invasion, rose from their ashes like the proverbial Phœnix, and spread over the country like swarms of locusts. Under their blighting shadow the Turkish power lost all vitalising force, and fell like Lucifer to rise no more. Their wrath did not let the invader even cross the river Chenab unmolested. His army was surrounded, reinforcements were cut off and hundreds of their officers and leaders were captured and brought to Amritsar. They were forced to dig and clean the Tank, which they had so ruthlessly filled up,† but not a single man was murdered from those captured.‡

* Umda-ul-Tawarikh.

† Sultan Mohd. Khan—Tarikhe-Sultani, *p*-134. History of the Punjab by M. Latif, *p*-233, and Forster's Travels.

‡ Forster's Travels.

## RISE OF SIKH POWER

The Sikhs were finally able to get together and Amritsar became once more safe. The Sikhs held a big council in Amritsar and took this sacrilege at the hands of the iconoclast as an eternal reminder, that the soul of the Temple was not its brick and mortar, but that impalpable, yet thoroughly real, *Nam*, of which alone they were the worshippers. It was decided to rebuild the damaged Temple. Sardar Jassa Singh, a renowned general of the Sikhs, laid the foundation stone on Baisakh 11, 1821 sambat (1764 A. D.). About seven lacs of rupees were collected for the new building by the Sikhs, while whole of the mortgage money was paid by the Sardar.*

Ahmad Shah again marched into the Punjab in 1765 and 1767 but without achieving any success.† So the Khalsa assembled at Amritsar and decided to take up the task of governing the Panjab. General Gordon writes :

" A general assembly was now held at Amritsar and by a decree the Khalsa was now proclaimed the dominent power of the Punjab and the Sikh Religion supreme. The assumption of sovereignty was marked by striking a coin with the inscription, ' Guru

* Lepel H. Griffin, the Rajas of the Punjab, *pp* 471 472.

† Gulshan Rai, History of India, *p*-407.

Gobind received from Nanak Degh, Tegh and Fateh —hospitality, valour and victory."*

Period of the Misals.

Time brought back the Khalsa to power. The Misals† were founded. Their primary object of power was to rescue the Sikh Shrines from the hands of aggressors and reform others by removing the unfit custodians. The Udasis,‡ who had served the Temple with great devotion in troublous times, finding the peaceful atmosphere handed over the management to the regularly

* Gordon, the Sikhs, *p*-65; Latif, History of the Punjab, *p*-287; Browne, India Tracts, *ii pp*-25, 27; Cunningham, Sikh History, *p*-154; Forster's Travels; *pp*-321, 323; Elphinstone, Kabul, *ii pp*-296, 297; and Murray, Ranjit Singh, *pp*-26, 27.

The author of 'The Punjab as a Sovereign State' (*p*-241) writes 'that there are rupees of almost pure silver each weighing 177 grs. He adds that the writing on the reverse of the coin means: Struck in Lahore, the Seat of Government in the auspicious Sambat, year 1822. The year corresponds to 1765 A. D.

†Some English historians have translated this word into confederacies. But *Misal* is an Arabic word meaning alike or equal. It was that government, where the rulers and the ruled were equal —a republic. Lt. Col. Steinbach in his book, The Panjab, states: 'The possession of each Sirdar was called a Missul, but he exercised no supremacy over it, for his followers exacted a share in the land proportioned to the service each had rendered, merely looking upon the Sirdar as the chief in war and arbitrator in peace.' The Sirdar preserved his power and authority by professing to be the servant of the Khalsa, (Malcolm *p*-114).

‡The Udasis had originally been appointed in the time of the sixth Guru as preachers of Sikhism. The peculiar dress they wore had been bestowed upon them by Baba Gurditta, the eldest son of the Sixth Master, in memory of the dress worn by the Great Guru Nanak during His Udasis or preaching tours. They incurred no danger, because not being baptised as full and regular Sikhs, they did not keep the baptismal forms.

baptised Sikhs, appointed as representatives of the various Misals by the Sikh Commonwealth, and again adopted their own preaching task. It was at this time that most of the services and canons of different ceremonies were established, which have come down to the present day. As district after district of the neighbouring territories came under the sway of the Sikhs they were enabled to lavish large sums on the additions and maintenance of the Golden Temple, which served as a bond of unity between all. The difference existed between the various leaders of the Misals 'but when collected at Amritsar no mark of strife or discord was allowed; all was harmony and peace.'*

General Gordon writing about management states, "The Sardars agreed by common consent that some one from among themselves should, from time to time, be appointed by the popular voice of the Khalsa to be the head of Church and State in the national council at Amritsar and to be guided by him in all matters requiring united action, thus forming a federal union."†

It was in the year 1800 that the management of the sacred shrines, particularly Akal Takht, was vested in the hands of Akalees under the leadership

* W. L. M'Gregor, History of the Sikhs, Malcolm in his Sketch of the Sikhs, *p*-120, states, 'When the chiefs meet (at Amritsar) it is concluded that all private animosities cease and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the Shrine of the generel good; and actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion and commonwealth, to which he belongs.'

† The Sikhs, *p*-73.

of Akali Phula Singh.* The word Akali means Immortal, and refers to a class of zealots, whom Sir John Gordon describes as, "They exercised a fierce scrutiny as censors in upholding strict compliance with the militant creed of the Singhs; constituted themselves defenders of the faith against innovations; took a prominent part in the Councils, in the planning and arranging of expedition for averting national danger and in educating the people in doctrines of Sikh Religion."

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, subjugated the Punjab and the North Western Frontier. The ten *misals* emerged into one and the Sikh Ruler established the central government at Lahore. Under this reign the country was on the whole wonderfully prosperous† as it formed a barrier for ever against the

Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

*Akali Phula Singh born in 1761 breathed his last in 1823. While an infant he lost his father. So Akali Narain Singh, (also known as Naina Singh), a friend of his father, took charge of him. He was brought up. He never married but devoted his life to the service of the Panth and the country. To sing hymns and to recite the songs of Sat Guru was the joy of his life. Though he was a mighty ally of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and had fought many a battle on his behalf yet he preferred to live in a Gurdwara than to stay at Maharaja's court.

He was respected and feared. If he found Maharaja Ranjit Singh wrong, he would unhesitatingly tell so in his face. Though faced by odds he never lost heart. The Sikhs remember this hero with pride and gratitude to this day.

† Punjab Administration Report, 1921—1922, Vol. I, *p*-65.

invasion from the north-west.* Maharaja Ranjit Singh founded a big empire but pride failed to conquer the true spirit of a Sikh. He was very particular about the daily recital of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in his presence and used to visit in state the Temple twice in a year† but was as humble then as an ordinary pilgrim.



Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Where as he spent lacs of rupees on mosques for Muslims and Hindu temples, his services to Amritsar were many and varied. He did much to beautify the Temple with gold work, gilding the upper half with gilded sheets and the lower half with inlaid marble mosaics and precious stones. The pavements were made in beautiful marble. Many beautiful presents that came to him were offered to the Shrine.

Once a very rich canopy was brought and spread

* Napolean already using every means to get at Britain was corresponding with Tippu and was discussing invasions of India through Afghanistan and the British were preparing counter-moves in India and Persia. At this juncture came the young Ranjit Singh on the stage to place very unexpectedly a barrier on the Indus..... .....A great kingdom it was and to the East India Company it seemed a most efficient barrier against invasion from the north-west. (Sir George MacMum, Martial Races of India. *pp*-134-138.)

†Gulshan Rai, The Punjab as a Sovereign State, *p*-204.

over the place where the Maharaja was to take his seat. It was made of gold work, very richly decked with pearls and jewels. Maharaja, while stepping beneath the canopy, noticed its beauty and ran out exclaiming, "I am unworthy of it. Take it for my Gurus." Never was such a simple and unshaken faith displayed by such a great ruler. Sir Lepel Griffin writes in his book, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, "We succeed in establishing him as a hero, as a ruler of men and as worthy of a pedestal in that innermost shrine where history honours the few human-beings to whom may be indisputably assigned the palm of greatness. He ruled the country which his military genius had conquered with a vigour of will and ability which placed him in the front ranks of the statesmen of the country."

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, as a ruler, did not control the places of worship. But the council of the Sikhs, which managed the Temple of Divine Music at that time, had elected him its leader for his services. This continued till his life-time and after his passing away his son Maharaja Kharak Singh, grandson Maharaja Nau Nihal Singh and Maharaja Sher Singh were appointed as heads of the council of management, from time to time.

## BRITISH PERIOD.

With the advent of the British-rule the old relations between the Panth and the control of the Gurdwaras were entirely upset. Col. Sir. Henry Lawerance, the Agent to the Governor-General appointed Sardar Lehna Singh as the first Manager of the Golden Temple, which had been so far under the control of the Panth through local *Sangat*. But the appointed Manager was not empowered to do anything that the Sikhs desired for their Temple. Daily allowances and expenses even were to be sanctioned by the Resident, before these were spent. The following important orders, issued by the Resident, (Lahore Political Diaries 1847-48, Vol. III) will be read with interest:

"S. Lehna Singh shows to the Darbar my proclamation forbidding Europeans from entering the holy Temples of Umritsar with their shoes on, killing of cows in Umritsar, or interfering in any manner with the Sikhs of that place."

5-4-1847. *p*-88.

It is cleared by another order in the same book Page 233.

"Major Mainwaring and Captain Knyvett, think themselves as much aggrieved as the priests of the temple; and the whole thing turns on the construction to be put on the orders which engraved on a

brass tablet in three languages, were given by me to the priests for their protection. The tablet certainly only says that persons are not to enter the Darbar Sahib with their shoes on, and a lawyer might possibly rule it that this meant only the Temple itself and not its precincts; but the tablet further directs that the priests are not to be molested, and therefore I should have thought it might have been clear to any sensible person that the spirit of the orders was to exclude all strangers from the holy ground (wherever the priests considered it to begin) unless they chose to comply with those forms and ceremonies which the priests prescribed to save the object of their veneration from disrespect."

The brass tablet is still preserved with other valuables in Tosha-Khana. The true copy of the tablet runs as follows:—

'The priests of Amritsur having complained of annoyances, this is to make known to all concerned, that by order of the Governor-General, British subjects are forbidden to enter the Temple (called the Durbar) or its precincts at Amritsur, or indeed any Temple with shoes on. Kine are not to be killed at Amritsur, nor are Seikhs to be molested, or, in any way to be interfered with. Shoes are to be taken off at the Bhoonga at the corner of the Tank and no person is to walk round the Tank with his shoes on.'

LAHORE, H. M. Lawrence

March 24th, 1847. Resident.

Concerning the Golden Temple two more orders were issued by the same Resident. They are:

"I requested that orders might be issued prohibiting any of the soldiers stationed at Gowind Garh from wearing arms on occasions of their visiting the Holy Temple of Umritsar."

7-9-47. *p*-280

"I sign an order for a daily allowance of Rupees 3-12-0 to be expended on the religious offerings of the Umritsar Temple."

20-11-47.

Sarbrahs or Managers.

This management continued till Amritsar District was placed under a Civil Officer in 1859. The management of the Temple was then entrusted to a committee of Sikh Sardars and Raises to settle the long standing disputes of the *pujaries* about their pays. A manager was appointed by this committee to look after the concerns of the Temple with the consent of the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar. The committee met rarely.* About 1883,

The real position is depicted by the priests in their petition against the Gurdwara Reform Movement to Sir Edward Doghlas Maclagan, the Lieutenant-Governor, Punjab in 1920. It assumes that no such committee was formed:

"Referring to preceding records of the Gurdwaras your petitioners observe that there was some invitation made by the Deputy Commissioner to some selected Sikh Sardars to discuss problems in connection with management of Gurdwaras or settlement of disputes between pujaris and Granthis. This practice ceased in the time of Col. Lang finding useless as party feeling. The manage ment in that period remained in the hands of Deputy Commissioner and the Manager." The selected Sardars joining the committee never claimed to undertake control of the sacred shrines though they always paid homage to them by presenting hundreds."

it was reduced to a manager (Sarbrah) who used to deal with all the affairs of the Temple. Thus the popular control of this Temple passed off in to the hands of the Manager who looked upon the post as sinecure. Eventually the abolition of democratic principles resulted in an unpopular management.

Instead of making the Holy of Holies the radiating centre of light and devotion, the priests considered it as the practising grounds of robbery and began to appropriate the offerings. The costly brocades offered as coverings for the Holy Scripture went to make their childern's clothes. The Temple precincts were infested with Brahmins who fleeced the simple pilgrims. The places of holding congregations were infested with hawkers selling their wares. This set up a great reaction and we find traces of discontent against the management since then.

Matters went from bad to worse till we find the Shrines managed by some interested person, under the orders of the Deputy Commissioner, without any respect or regard for the religious feeling of the community. It was during this regime in 1914 that the Sikh victims of Kauma Gata Maru tragedy* were condemned at the Akal Takht and General Dyer, the perpetrator of Jallianwala Bagh's massacre†

*For details see 'Gurdwara Reform Movement' *pp.*57-73.

†Public agitation against the Rowlatt Bills was at its height when the administration of Amritsar was given to the military under the command of General Dyer on the 10th April, 1919.

On the 13th April General Dyer issued a proclamation :

"No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets in the city or outside it at any time. Any such procession or

of 1919, 'who had also thought that he might have to fire again to send the mob out of the Golden

gathering of four men will be looked upon as unlawful assembly and will be dispersed by force of arms if necessary."

The number of people who could have heard the proclamation promulgated is put down at 8 to 10000 people; the total population of the city is put down as 160,000 to 170,000. Besides this here was a large influx of people from outside owing to the Baisakhi fair, which is an important religious festival and there was also a cattle fair.

Under these circumstances a public meeting was held in Jallianwala Bagh on the 13th after-noon. General Dyer did not manage to prevent this assembly but went to the Bagh with a mind to fire upon them with machine-guns, which he could not use owing to the accident of his being unable to take the armoured cars into the narrow entrance leading to the Bagh. So General Dyer with his military opened fire on the people in the meeting who were at a distance of 100 or 150 yards, without giving any warning or asking the people to disperse. The people, as soon as the first shots were fired, began to run away through the few exits the place had got but General Dyer continued firing till the ammunition ran short.

In all 1650 rounds were fired. The General admitted that he could disperse this meeting without fire. The Disorders Enquiry Committee under the presidentship of the Hon'ble Lord Hunter opined, 'we feel that General Dyer by adopting an inhumane and un-British method of dealing with subjects of His Majesty, the King Emperor, has done great disservice to the interests of British rule in India. The action of General Dyer as well as some acts (crawling order) of the martial-lw administration, to be referred to hereafter, have been compared to the acts of 'frightfulness' committed by some of the German military commanders during the war in Belgium and France.'

(Hunter's Disorders Enquiry Committee Report).

The then Governor of the province, Sir Micheal O' Dwyar approved the action of General Dyer whereas Mr. C.F. Andrews described it as 'a cold and calculated massacre.' He says, "I have gone into every single detail with all the care and thoroughness that a personal investigation could command and it remains to me an unspeakable disgrace, indefensible, unpardonable and inexcusable." Such is the verdict of non-official Englishman.

Temple* it the occasion arose, was given an ovation by the priests and presented with a robe of honour. This incensed the Sikh public very much. The control of the Premier Temple was demanded by the Sikhs from the Government but in vain. The manager, who had done this all as the Punjab Government wished, before he was taken to task, apologised to the Khalsa and resigned the managership. It will be interesting to view this incident with that of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's life. The great Sikh Ruler, defender of the poor and the helpless, came to the Temple. He was condemned by the fearless Akali Phula Singh, the then incharge of Akal Takht, for some of his acts. The Maharaja to expiate his sins prepared himself for the punishment. He was ordered to be flogged in the public. The tamarind tree still stands as a witness to which the hands of Maharaja were tied. The Ruler bared his back in all humility and faith to have the punishment meted out to him. The Sikh audience held their breath and many a tear was shed. This was, however, dramatically averted by the magnanimity of the Sikh leaders, who let off the Maharaja with some fine only, keeping in view his services to the Temple and the public. History has very few records of such democratic religious congregations where justice was meted out to the Ruler and the ruled with the same strictness and has no instance on record where an emperor displayed such humility in the religious

*From Dyer's statement given to the Disorders Enquiry Committee.

matters of the State. This was because the Panth is considered to be supreme in all matters and none dares to defy its behests with impunity, whatever his rank and position in life may be.

## GURDWARA REFORM MOVEMENT

The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh has brought awakening amongst the Sikhs. It was the 12th October, 1920. Some newly baptized Sikhs were brought by the reformers-the Khalsa Brotherhood of Amritsar, to offer *Karah Prasad* at the Golden Temple. It was customary with the priests then to turn out from the Temple the Sikhs baptized from the low caste. Their *Prasad* also was not accepted. This refusal of *Prasad* being against the doctrines of Sikhism,* the reformers insisted on the acceptance. This was, however, agreed upon to be referred to the Holy Granth. A hymn was decided to be read from the Guru Granth, the orders according to which were to be binding and final. The hymn was read out as :

*Sikhism regards no caste-system, 'Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man' being its cardinal doctrine. That the Gurus laid a solid foundation for the obliteration of social distinctions and fostered social equality and racial sameness will be evident from the following quotations from Sri Guru Granth Sahib:—

1. Vain are distinctions based on caste and pedigree,
   All human beings look to One Protector. (Guru Nanak).
2. Caste and distinction depend upon one's actions and deeds. (Guru Nanak).
3. God will not enquire of the caste or race of a person.
   He will ask of what one has done. (Guru Nanak).
4. Do not be proud of the caste, O Ignorant fool.
   (Guru Amar Das).
5. When the whole universe has emerged out of the some Light, who can be good and who can be bad? (Kabir ji).

"Brother, He sends grace even to those who have no merit, and takes from them the true Guru's services, which is most noble, as it turns our hearts to the love of God. He Himself forgives and brings us into union with Himself. Brother, how worthless, were we, and yet the perfect and the true Enlightener took us on His society. My dear, what a lot of sinners He has forgiven by the reason of His true Word! How many He has ferried across the world-ocean, in the Guru's safety bark! By the touch of the Philosopher's stone, that is the Master, base metal has become gold. Selfishness has departed and the Nam has come to live in the heart. Our light has blended with His light and we have become one with Him." (*Sorath III*).

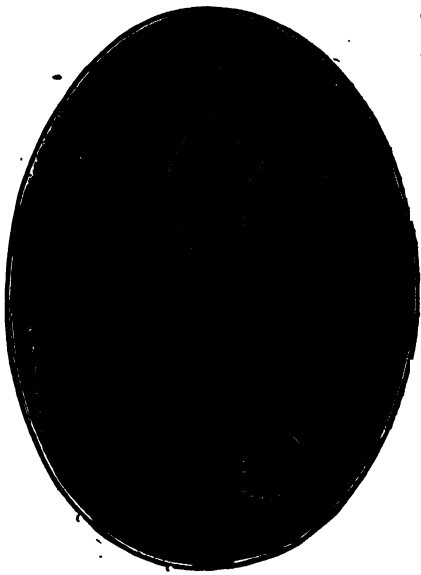
The words had a wonderful effect. Hundreds of men in the audience were visibly affected. The priests, too, were convinced and they agreed to offer prayer and accept the Sacred Food from the hands of the newly-converted Sikhs. There was no unpleasantness in the whole proceedings and the priests were left to carry on their work.

The whole party came out successful and went to Akal Takht. The priests fled from their posts. The Throne could not be left vacant. The assembly led by Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar called for 25 volunteers to sit and watch there temporarily without touching the money or property. The Sarbrah was informed of it. The priests were called upon to express regret for having deserted the Sacred Throne. They did not come.

The next day on October 13, the Deputy Commissioner convened a meeting to discuss the new turn of events in the Golden Temple. The priests did not attend it. So a provisional committee of nine Sikhs, all reformers, was formed including the Sarbrah at its head, to manage the Golden Temple. This committee, later on, handed over the charge of the Temple to the new organization—Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee—and thus it was brought under Panthic control.

## SHIROMANI GURDWARA PARBANDHAK COMMITTEE.

This awakening regarding Gurdwara-reforms otherwise known as Akali Movement was discussed by the Local Government with H. M. the Maharaja of Patiala, and a provisional advisory committee of 36 members was appointed to frame a constitution for, and to temporarily supervise the management of Darbar Sahib.



S. Kharak Singh.

The next day after this decision of the Government the

Sikhs of all shades of opinion from different parts of the country, including the Sikh States, came to the pre-arranged meeting held before Akal Takht. The assembly appointed a committee of 175 members known as Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which was not only to concern itself with the management of the Golden Temple, but to reform and control all the Sikh Shrines and Gurdwaras. S. Kharak Singh, whose sacrifice for the *panthic* cause is well-known, was elected its president. The new committee included the 36 members of the Government—appointed committee. They were also efected on a sub-committee formed to manage the Golden Temple and the Shrines allied to it.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement being a purely religious movement naturally commanded the sympathy and support of all right-minded men. But the Government viewed with suspicion the organisation,* the rapid progress, and development of this movement and had from the very start of the movement kept its

*The Government officials remark as follows about the Sikhs but their religious organization was viewed with suspicion—

'I appreciate highly the manly qualities of the Sikhs—their loyalty and devotion.' H. M. The King George V.

'Every traveller, and still more every Viceroy, must be aware of the loyalty and the valour of the noble race of the Sikhs. These virtues are independent of locality, or climate, or conditions of service. As under-secretary for Foreign Affairs in England, I was brought into contact with the brave deeds of Sikh soldiers in heart of East Africa and at the source of the Nile; wherever they go they are courageous, manly and true, loyal to the sovereign whom they serve, faithful to the regiment whose badge they wear, devoted to the officers whom they follow, and fearless even into death such are the Sikh soldiers, the pith of the Indian army. As I move about India,

iron-hand stretched out to check or stem this rising tide of Sikh reform by all direct and indirect methods.

The massacre of Nankana Sahib along with such other acts gave a rude shock to the general apathy of the Sikh community and the brave Sikh masses shuddered with horror and rose as one to sacrifice their lives for the noble work of purifying their holy temples. But a wholesale repression of the Sikhs

I see at the site of historic seiges or engagements, the scenes of their heroism and self-sacrifice."
(H.E. Lord Curzon, Ex-Viceroy and the Governor General of India).

'You belong to a race whose name stands for the manly virtues of courage and loyalty, not only in your home between your five rivers, but throughout the whole civilized world.'

(H.E. Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India).

'It was the Sikh soldiers who bore an honorable part in the conguest and pacification of the East African Countries.'

(Rt. Hon'ble Winston Spencer Churchille, M.P.)

'Since the annexation of the Punjab to the British Crown the Sikhs have been amongst the bravest and most loyal soldiers of the Indian army as the Mutiny, the Tirah campaign and Somali-Land have testified." (Morning Post—London.)

'Strong of body; active, intelligent, unfettered by the bounds of caste-prejudice, full of courage and gifted with wonderful stamina accustomed to live on flesh or to dispense with it, the Sikh has the making of the finest soldier in the world.'

(Col. G.B. Malleson C.S.I. Decisive Battles of India, *p.* 305).

Despite this all the Sikhs, during this Reform movement underwent undeterred and undaunted into dismay all variations of potential sufferings. Whether they were trampled under the hoofs of horses, cudgelled with the buttends of guns, thrown into the Potter's kiln and burnt alive, their flesh minced fired at or put under inhuman jail treatment the strictly non voilent Sikhs did not raise their little fingers by way of resistance or retaliation.

followed. Instead of being allowed to manage their shrines, whence they are to get inspiration to ennoble their souls, they were harassed by the Government. *

On November 7, 1921, after the Government had publicly declared so many times that it had given up the control of the Golden Temple and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee had been incharge for a year, the Government considered it advisable to snatch away the keys of the Golden Temple. The

*Lord Olivier's statement in House of Lords, on February 26th, 1924 throws some light on Government's justification in its repressive policy for the Gurdwara Reform Movement:

"The Sikhs are a religious denomination.....
.....According to Professor Keith, the Sikhs are one of the finest both in bone conformation and in brain conformation, of any of the races that ever appeared on the earth. I know an Englishman, who came into contact with the Sikhs and who has the greatest admiration and affection for them. They are a people of fine, ancient, noble race and they are one of those ancient and noble races which have, if I may say so, a constitutional apprehension of the spiritual life. They are profoundly religious. Some little time ago, the Sikhs had a religious revival. They found themselves in this position, that the Shrines that had been established for the reading of their Scripture and for the worship of God had in later times fallen into the hands of corrupt priests, *Mahants*, who had taken possession of properties and annexed Shrines and were abusing their authority for the purposes of gain and dissipation. The Sikh religious community clamoured for reform. They formed themselves into a puritan reform movement. It is unfortunate that the Sikhs were not placed, when their Reformation came, as we were. If this thing had taken place in this country, it would have been solved without difficulty. The reigning Prince would have placed himself at the head of the reform movement. He would have declared himself a defender of the Faith, and himself would have confiscated the disputed properties and would have bestowed them upon his principal religious supporters. .....Such a method did not occur to the authorities of the Punjab".

high-handed action of the Government was deeply resented, especially in view of the fact that the keys of the Gurdwara treasury being with the Government the *jalau* or exhibition ceremony could not be held on the sacred day of Sri Guru Nanak's birth. There was a great chaos and those who protested were flung into jails. Wiser counsel, however, prevailed and the Government restored the keys on the 12th February, 1922 and the prisoners were released.

After a long period of more than five years the Gurdwara Bill rang a final curtain down over this movement. But the complicated clauses and sections of the Bill had involved the community in endless quarrels, litigation, and expenditure since then. Throughout this movement, Akal Takht, whence the *Hukamnamas* were issued, remained the centre of the Sikhs' attraction.

With the establishment of the Panthic committee the long-standing evils have been removed. All the shops in the *Parkarma*, which used to give refuge to men and women of evil repute, have been abolished and the hawkers of all sorts forbidden to carry on their trade within the sacred precincts of the Temple. The whole place has acquired again the traditional Sikh view. Holy congregations and unceasing Divine Music in the Temple revive the glories of the Khalsa which are recounted in the daily prayer.

Present-day management of the Golden Temple is in the hands of the local committee with S. Jaswant Singh Jhabalia as its president, elected under Section 85 of Sikh Gurdwaras Act (Punjab Act No: VIII 1925) for a period of three years.

## INCOME AND TOSHA-KHANA

**Income** :—The offerings and donations made at the Temple form the main source of income. There were no offerings at the Temple during the life-time of Gurus as they were presented to the Master directly. Hari Mandir was a simple institution of Hari-Kirtan. The Tenth-Nanak passed away vesting Guruship in Guru Granth. So the offerings were then made at the Temple to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Spiritual-Living-Guru of the Sikhs. In the beginning, for some years, the income of offerings was forwarded to Mata Sundri, the widow of Guru Gobind Singh, at Delhi and its use was at her discretion.

With the lapse of short time, the persecution of the Sikhs commenced. Due to this harassment the income of the Temple was not permanent. It was very small, hardly sufficient to maintain the incumbents. There was, therefore, no temptation for them to be corrupt or defy the congregation. Besides this the offering of money was looked upon by the selfless incumbents as poisonous.* It was spent on the free

*The Sikhs are forbidden the use of offerings. Guru Gobind Singh threw gold muhars into the river Satluj. He preferred it than to distribute them to the Singhs. The Master wished His Sikhs should earn their own livelihood and it was incumbent upon them to subsist by honest means, feeding the poor out of their lawful income; whereas these muhars were the product of the income brought by offerings, which was tantamount to poison. As mother would not administer poison to her sons, so would He refrain from serving poison to His sons, the Khalsa.

Also see Macauliffe, Vol. I. *p*-45 and Vol. III, *p*-8; Bhai Gurdas, Var V.12; and Rattan Singh's Panth Parkash.

kitchens invariably attached to the temples, or in some other way beneficial to the *Sangat*.

In the times of Misals and during the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the offerings at the Temple increased. Persons of exemplary character were incharge of the Temple. They even refused to accept jagirs for themselves whenever offered by the Sikh Sardars. The income was then mostly spent on the decorative work of the Temple and free-kitchen.

After the Sikh-wars and with the advent of the British rule, the Panth lost its control over their premier Temple. It passed off into the hands of the Government. The priests had no vigilant eye to watch them and they were overtaken by greed. So very meagre sums were expended on the Temple or the *Langar*, while most of the money was pocketed by the interested persons. The result was that the Temple's treasury began to dwindle away and there arose the mutual quarrels amongst the priests. As a result of some agitation the Government introduced a Code-of-Law called *Dastur-ul-amal*, which required the priests to deposit certain amount in the treasury. It was short-lived. The corruption could not be eradicated and the misuse of the trust continued till the management of the Temple passed into new hands. Now the expenses are under the control of the committee appointed by the Sikh-Sangat. Regular provisions have since been made by the committee for the free-kitchen, charitable hospital, Khalsa High School, Library, Guru Ram Das Niwas Asthan and other important additions.

During the Sikh Raj and after, the whole octroi revenue of the city had been dedicated to the Temple, on account of which the city enjoys world-wide fame. Gradually the revenue allowed to Darbar Sahib was cut down, until only six pies in the rupee were paid. This, too, was taken away and now only the partial light expenses of the Temple and the canal charge on the water supplied to the Sacred Tanks are paid out of the Municipal Funds. This was all due to lack of proper Sikh representation on the administration of the city.

The annual income of the Temple amounts approximately to Rs. 300,000. The amount of *Jagirs* endowed for Sri Darbar Sahib at the time of 'the Lion of the Punjab, was worth 1 lac 75 thousand, which has been reduced today to that of Rs. 6000 per annum only.

**Tosha-Khana** —The usual place of safe-keeping of the valuables, offered at the Temple, is *Toshx-Khana* or Treasure House. It is located on the main-gate or the Darshani Darwaza, which leads to the bridge. Entering by the doors of massive silver plates, a staircase leads to an upper chamber which contains a big chest in which repose the different valuables:— A gold *pankha* (fan), two gold fly-whisks (*chauries*), one fly-whisk of Sandal wood;* a canopy embroidered with pure gold weighing 10 lbs set with diamonds, emeralds and rubies; a gold pendant; a canopy richly embroidered giving coloured plan of the whole Temple; a very

*This was offered by a Mohammadan Faqir, Haji Mohd. Maskin on December 31, 1925

beautiful *jalau* set with diamonds. A diadem of precious stones with strings of pearls worth lacs, prepared at the marriage of Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh, the grandson of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but presented to the Temple, is still exhibited in this jalau on certain ceremonial occasions: *i. e.*, on the birthdays of Guru Nanak, Guru Ram Das, Guru Gobind Singh and Bhadron Sudi 1. In addition to these valuables there are innumerable canopies, carpets, brocades and several other objects of art and antiquity, besides many paintings depicting the lives of the Gurus and other Sikh Heroes.

Formerly there existed a huge building in the open space between Akal Takht and the main-gate. It was used as Tosha-Khana. But as this obstructed the view and crowded the place it was pulled down. Since then the chamber in the upper storey of the main-gate has been used as Treasure-House.

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## VARIOUS PARTS OF THE TEMPLE

**Darshani Darwaza** :—The main-gate or Darshani Darwaza is through an archway facing the Akal Takht. There is always an Akali-Sewadar standing there as a sentinal with the silver-staff in his hands. He watches the endless stream of worshippers, which pours through the gate day and night, so that none may take sticks, umbrellas, wet clothes or unsightly things in the Sacred Shrine. Maharaja Sher Singh had a purda-bath room, for ladies, built in 1841 on the southern side of the gate. It was demolished recently. Guide's Office is in the adjoining rooms of this main-gate.

The marble door-frame of the gate is about 10 feet in height and 8 feet 6 inches in width. The doors fixed in it have beautiful ivory work carved on them. To the north-west corner of the gate stand two golden flag-staves on marble pedestals with saffron coloured flags, with Sikh National emblems, fluttering on them.

**Ante-Chamber** :—The ante-chamber in which the gate opens is 45 feet long and 14 feet broad. The decorative work on the ceiling was done by Raja Sangat Singh of Jind, while the other gold work by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Both in northern and southern walls are stairways leading to the upper storey, which has Tosha-Khana.

**Bridge** :—The bridge connects the gate-way with the Temple proper, 240 feet long and 21 feet wide, it is built in water with ten arched spans. There are other 38 small spans to support the larger ones. On either side of the bridge are fixed ten marble lamp-posts with gold lanterns on them. A fine marble railing runs throughout the length between the lamp-posts. On the northern side a lamp-post bears a sun-dial instead of lantern. It was built by Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia in 1852. The pavement was laid with coloured marble by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1835.

On festival days a movable timber partition is placed in the middle running through the whole length of the bridge to divide the stream of pilgrims into incoming and outgoing passages.

**Hari-Ki-Pauri**:—Thirteen feet wide *pradakshina* or the procession-path runs round the Shrine. To its east are steps leading to the Holy Tank, called Hari-Ki-Pauri. Gurn Arjan, after finishing the building, drew forth and partook of the Amrita or the sacred water of the Tank from this place. The Kar-Sewa-Ceremony in 1923 was also inaugurated here. The *pradakshina* is roofed here. The roofs of the Temple and Hari-Ki-Pauri were silver-plated and the walls marbled in 1820 by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and in 1837 by Maharaja Kharak Singh. The roofs were afterwards gold-plated by Sardar Amrik Singh Sandhawalia.

**The Temple Proper**:—Isolated by a sheet of blue water, the Temple ramains immune from all

worldly trouble, whose dust and smoke can never touch its pearly surface. The holy waters wash its walls which remain firm in a Sea of *Maya*.* Mark the contrast between this tempestuous Sea, on the one hand, and the Firm Throne of the *Akal-Purakh* which is poised in the aforesaid Lake like one big lotus. If one has mastered the underlying idea—this eternal contrast between *Maya* and *Purśha*, and the connecting bridge of *Nam*, then alone one can realise the ground-plan devised by that Supreme Architect, Who fashioned the Golden Temple on earth on the self-same lines on which the heavens and the cosmos itself are built!

The Temple is 40.6 feet each way on a raised platform of 67 feet square. The lower part of the walls is faced with marble slabs inlaid with arabesques of conventional flower sprays in many precious hued stones. But above this gleaming white dado all the Temple walls and cornices, dripstone and roof, slender columns, cupolas and finials are one blaze of gilded copper. The Temple has four doors, one in each direction. It represents that this is a Temple meant not for any particular sect or denomination, but for one and all, as much for the East as for the West, North or South.

In the Temple on a small low bed reposes Guru Granth Sahib, the symbol of devotion and spiritual guidance of the devotees, under a beautiful canopy. The pilgrims come, bow down, kneel with folded hands or prostate muttering, all the while in prayers,

* Delusion.

the Divine Name and place their offerings which range from a pice or a handful of grain to a gold coin or the richest treasure. Behind the Holy Book sits a Granthi and on his right the musicians chant hymns day and night with the accompaniment of the usual Indian orchestra. Behind the musicians, is fixed in the wall a beautiful clock which was presented by Lord Curzon, Ex. Viceroy and the Governor-General of India, on the 9th April, 1900 as a token of homage and respect to the Shrine. Opposite the Holy Granth where the pilgrims make their offerings, sits a party of priests distributing *Prasad* to every pilgrim who puts forth his or her hands. Beautiful flowers and garlands are brought as offerings, which lie in blissful repose on or about the Sacred Granth. The pilgrims accept these reverently and relish them as a token of His Grace.



LORD CURZON

It will be interesting to note the inscription which was to be found on the left side wall of the Darshani Darwaza but has been replaced now by its Vernacular translation.

'It should be generally known that a wonderful event took place in the Golden Temple. This building was erected by the Great Guru Ram Das, King of

kings, Who gives blessings and receives worship from all creatures. The following is an account of what occurred on the 30th of April, 1877 at 4-30 A. M.

About four hundred persons according to ancient custom were in this Darbar Sahib and listening to psalms whose music was almost drowned by the roar of thunder. Suddenly a flash of lightning fell from Heaven and entered the Holy Place by the northern door, close to the musicians. A ball of fire about two seers in weight burst in the Temple shining with dazzling and terrible brightness. Then immediately after shining before the Holy Book, it returned to the sky by the southern entrance and although it fell with such awful violence and so loud a report, yet there was no injury caused to the Darbar Sahib or human life. Therefore all were assembled in ascribing this miracle to Guru Ram Das, Who dedicated this Temple to Hari..... Sufficient money was gathered to pay for seven readings of Guru Granth Sahib and to feed some thousands of poor people who all expressed their gratitude. This notice is intended as a remembrance of the miracle of Guru Ram Das'.

The eastern loggia of the Temple was gilded by Rani Sada Kaur* at a cost of Rs. 175300, while the other three sides were done in gold by Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the heavy cost of Rs. 535332. The whole of the decorative work wrought in gold was executed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his son and grandson Maharaja Kharak Singh and Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh.

* Mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The upper floor of the Temple, 40 feet each side, is approached by two flights of steps near Hari-Ki-Pauri and one on the external north-west corner. The floor is paved with marble and the walls are decorated with rich floral designs.

There is a small 'hall of mirrors' in this floor known as *Shish Mahal*. Originally it was a pavilion where Gurus used to sit in contemplation. The modern decoration was made by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. On the side-walls of this *Mahal* or palace, the hymns of Japji and Jap are inscribed in gold letters. Now it is used for *Akhand Path*, the continuous recitation of Guru Granth Sahib. On the second floor is the big golden dome. Smaller domes decorate the parapet. On the stairs leading to this floor there is a painting depicting the Tenth Guru riding with His Five Chosen Ones out on hunting. It is beautifully executed. Apart from the religious aspect the picture has much artistic value.

No doubt, that the Temple is tastefully decorated but those who look on merely the alabaster and the gold miss the inner spirit which pervades the whole building, but for which it would have been another colourless temple. The whole place is literally crammed with Divine influence, and no one who enters the sacred precincts of the Darbar Sahib can fail to be stirred by that immanent Light which is congealed, as it were, to form the bedrock of this Temple.

**Daily Programme** :—The usual programme or daily routine of the religious functions in the Golden

Temple is very faithfully and rigidly observed since the Tempie was built. A few modifications were introduced by Pujaries (Priests) but were abolished with the new management. A visitor, if he be keen to see these ceremonies carried on with a mediæval reverence should visit this place at about two or three in the morning. This is the time, when the devouts leave their beds to serve the Lord and sit for sometime in contemplation of the Great One. It provides a spiritual joy and elation (*Amrit-rasa*) now very rarely found in any temple of worship. After the whole place is cleaned and washed it is ready for the reception of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is brought in a very beautiful golden palanquin accompanied by singing of the hymns and the lurid soft glow of the torch light from Akal Takht. At the front door of the Shrine the Holy Book is taken out from palanquin on the priest's head, who takes it to the low bed on the eastern-side. This is covered then with sheets and drapery richly perfumed and finely embroidered. The Guru Granth is opened flat. The devotees strain their eyes and stretch their necks to have a glimpse of the Master. Ears are attentive to catch the voice of the priest, when he reads out the first hymn. The eager and yearning faces of the people present, the subdued light, the sweet perfume of the incense-burning, and the tense religious influence of the Place, makes an atmosphere of reverence and religious faith. All initiates and disciples feel a solace unknown elsewhere. The living presence of the Gurus is realized. After this the Sacred Book is covered with sheets. The musicians begin to recite

*Asa-di-War*, the morning ode. This takes about three to four hours. Then all standing with folded hands offer *Ardas* (Prayer to God). The priest chants in a low sonorous voice the names of the Gurus and then the Heroes of the Sikh Nation, followed by the names from whose permanent funds daily offerings are made at the Temple. Another hymn is read from the Sacred Book and *Karah Prasad* is distributed among the congregation. The Divine Music never ceases. The musicians keep it continuously for the whole day, while in the Temple the stream of pilgrims continue pouring.

With sun-set *Rahras*, the Evening Prayer is recited by the Granthi. Then all standing offer *Ardas* at His Feet. Shortly after this a party of priests and pilgrims with a standard and torches starts from the main-gate of the Temple. They go round the Tank reading and reciting hymns in the praise of Great God.*

At about eleven in the night *Kirtan Sohila*, the last prayer of the day, is recited. The Sacred Book is wrapped up and carried back in palanquin to Akal Takht. The doors of the Temple with its main-gate

*Guru Har Gobind had to move out of Amritsar. The Sikhs, left at Amritsar, felt very keenly the pangs of His separation. Headed by Bhai Budha, they commenced a divine service of *Dhyanam* in 1612. Every evening they would light torches and go in procession round the Shrine, feeling the Master to be with them. On Guru's return He told Bhai Budha how that devotion had attracted His mind to the Golden Temple every evening. He blessed them, saying that the nightly choir organized by Bhai Budha would abide for ever at Hari Mandir, and that He would always be with it.

are also closed. Thus practically the Temple remains open for pilgrims and the hymns in praise of the Lord are sung without any interruption.† No lecture or discussion is allowed in the Temple. The religious and political gatherings are held at Akal Takht and other places outside the Temple proper. In the Temple itself the continuous river of devotion and worship flows at all times so that any one may drink his fill, whereas in other temples there are fixed times for Divine Service.

†This simple and beautiful custom among the Sikhs was seen and remarked upon by Sujan Rai of Batala, who wrote in 1697 in his Khulastul Tawarikh :

"The only way of worship with them is that they read the hymns composed by their Gurus and sing them sweetly in accompaniment with musical instruments".

## THE TANK OF IMMORTALITY

The Holy Tank, a square of about 510 feet, is 17 feet in depth. It gets most of its water from the natural springs. *Hansli*,* the water-channel, also feeds it with water. There are separate bathing arrangements for ladies at different places, which are properly screened and managed. A low wall has been put all around in the Tank to avoid persons going into the deep water.

**Kar-Sewa**:—The Tank of Immortality was filled up with earth by the Moghal Governors and Afghan invaders and cleaned by the devotees more than once. In the days of harmony and peace it was under the leadership of Akali Phula Singh in 1800 that the Tank was cleaned for the first time.† Maharaja Sher Singh also planned to do this service. But owing to his early death, only a part of the Holy

*Hansli, the water-channel, was dug by the Sikhs long before the British rule in 1781 to provide river-water from the Ravi to the sacred tanks of Amritsar. This all was due to the efforts of Sant Pritamdas and Santokhdas. This channel was connected with canal 'Bari Doab'. In 1914 the Deputy Commissioner stopped this aqueduct and made insufficient arrangements for providing tube-well water to the tanks. There was a great uproar and protest against this action. So the old system was restored. Now the underground Hansli, 8946 feet long, provides canal-water to the Holy Tank. Recently this water-channel was cemented through the efforts of Sant Gurmukh Singh ji.

†B. Prem Singh, Akali Phula Singh, *p*-34.

Tank could be cleaned and the work was left undone.

Once again the Sacred Tank cleansing ceremony or Kar-Sewa was undertaken by the Khalsa Panth in the Summer of 1923. Kar Sarowar Committee, with Bhagat Jaswant Singh as its secretary, was set up. It planned out the whole thing and carried out the details with faith, zeal and perseverance. The Nation also responded to the clarion call and lacs of people from all corners of the world and all walks of life gathered at Amritsar to partake of this service. A grand organised procession started early in the morning of the 17th June, 1923 after religious diwan at Gurdwara Pipli Sahib,* near Khalsa College† to inaugurate the Kar-Sewa Ceremony of the Holy Tank. As the advance party of the procession

*News would come that pilgrims to Hari Mandir were on their way from Kabul, Qandhar or other distant places. Dressed like a peasant, the Fifth-Nanak, Guru Arjan, would go out of Amritsar barefooted, His wife accompanying Him with a basket containing bread and vegetables. Both would wait on the roadside, where Gurdwara Pipli Sahib now stands, for the disciples who came along singing the hymns of the Guru. The Master would welcome them, as the Mother distributed bread and water, without letting people know who they were.

†Two miles down the Great Trunk Road in the direction of Lahore is the fine Sikh educational institution, the Khalsa College. It is affiliated to the degree standard of the Punjab University. It is a strikingly handsome and dignified building with many architectural features. Founded in March 1892, it is now one of the premier institutions in the Province. Attached to it is an agricultural dairy-farm. One of the great ambitions of the Sikh Community is to convert the Khalsa College into a University.

reached the Golden Temple, a prayer, for the due *fulfilment of the Service* undertaken, was offered. *After invoking the Gurus and all the religious* celebrity the *Prasad* was *distributed. The five* chosen—Rev. Sant Sham Singh; S. B. Mehtab Singh, President S. G. P. C.; Bhai Teja Singh, Jathedar Akal Takht; Bhai Pritam Singh of Anandpur and Bhai Gulab Singh of Gholia—took up the gold spades and silver pans and inaugurated the ceremony. The procession consisting of not less than a million of devotees terminated at the Temple late in the afternoon.

The water had been allowed to run dry and the silt was then removed in buckets, basins, shawls and even laps by every Sikh present there. On the first day the people were allowed to give free play to their faith and do the service in any way they liked. But all, in a spirit of devotion and with calm dignity, took up the work and performed it in an organised, disciplined, efficient and work-man-like spirit. People of other communities were wonderstruck when they saw His Highness Sir Bhupindra Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala and big sardars with their poor brethern, joining in a file into the Tank and filling their vessels with the sacred silt and carrying upon their heads to take it outside the precincts of the Temple. From the next day regular parties of different districts were organised at different places and the work started in a systematic manner.

Relays of ladies and gentlemen were daily seen carrying baskets of mud on their heads, chanting

*Satnam-Wahiguru, Satnam-Wahiguru.* Hindus and Mohammedans, men and women of all ages and different social positions, from princes to the keeper of shoes, flocked from all sides to share this noble service. They worked for labour of love with ecstasy on their faces and a thrill in their hearts. It was a beautiful sight to see a band of 200 Mohammedans working in mud, after taking food in Guru's kitchen and reading Nimaz in Guru Ka Bagh with hundreds of Sikhs looking and pouring blessings on them. All, who came burning with love of service, were accommodated in *Bungas* and other buildings close to the Temple.

Thousands of rupees were daily spent to run the Temple of Bread—Guru's *Langar*. But thanks to the philanthropy of people, the managing committee had no difficulty in finding the money, which came unsolicited and the devotees vied with one another in providing the rations for the kitchen.

The best spirit of the Khalsa, which the Tenth Master inculcated, preached and lived, was seen infusing the whole affair and for once united all ranks of the community in one object, one purpose, and one method. The whole took up three weeks only. The fresh water of the springs was let out, the canal was opened and the Tank was once again full on the 9th July.

**Pradakshina**:—The outer marble pavement of the Tank or *pradakshina* (circumambulation)is 25 feet wide. With a sum of Rs. 22000, paid by Raja Randhir Singh of Kapurthala, its northern side was

paved in beautiful marble. The paving expenses of the western side were met from the income of the Temple and of other sides by Maharaja Raghbir Singh of Jind. Surrounding the *pradakshina* are *bungas** of the past and the present Chiefs and other notables. There was a palatial *bunga* built by Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh at the present site of Clock Tower.† The Bunga was demolished by the Government in 1867 and Clock Tower erected instead as an emblem of Christianity.

*Bunga is a technical name in vernacular for the houses built round a sacred shrine. They are meant for the residence of the pilgrims.

†Lord Curzon said, "I have intense dislikening for this unsightly tower erected just near the beautiful Temple."

(Khalsa Samachar, April 16, 1900).

'I hope that the next time I come the most horrible brick tower (clock tower) will be destroyed.'

R. Bolonty, Engineer
Liege, Belgium.

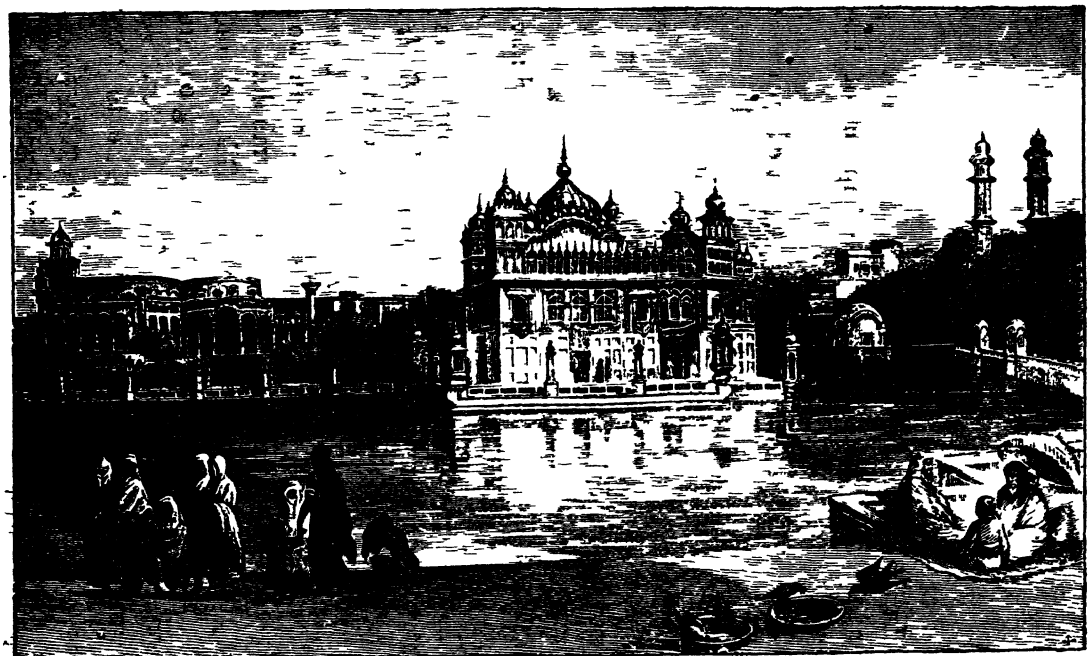
'Very nice visit of the Golden Temple. Much better without clock tower.

J. Simey, Paris.'

'My wife and I feel that the clock tower's architecture should be more in keeping with the design of the Golden Temple so as not to spoil the beauty of the locality.'

Captain Jackson,
Ambala.

Will the authorities consider this?



GOLDEN TEMPLE—WHEN THERE WAS NO CLOCK TOWER

## AKAL TAKHT

In the precincts of the Temple are the following other important places either of worship or of historical record.

Facing the main shrine, but separated from it by an open compound, stands a large building called Akal Takht or the Throne of the Immortal. This important addition was made by Guru Har Gobind in 1609. Since then it has been customary to issue from this Throne such religious, social and political edicts known as *Hukam-Namas*, as the Sikh Panth considered necessary and conducive to the growth of the Commonwealth.

It was here that Bhai Budha, the hoar-headed Saint, placed before GuruHar Guru Gobind the *Saili**. He saluted it and said to Bhai Budha, "No, give me two swords to wear instead". And the Sixth Master donned the double sword signifying a combination of spiritual and temporal leadership, symbolizing a new phase in the development of the Sikh character. This Throne was used for holding congregation, and courts in the time of the Master. All classes of men and women have, from time to time,

*Saili was a Ribbon of Renunciation that Guru Nanak wore and gave to Guru Angad, from whom it passed to Guru Amar Das, Ram Das and Arjan in turn.

approached those incharge of the Akal Takht to seek help and protection against the tyranny of the strong and the wicked. On the other hand, the award of a robe of honour by the authorities of the Golden Temple or Akal Takht has ever been regarded as a mark of very special favour, which is only conferred on those, who may have rendered distinguished services either to the Panth or the public at large.

When a Sikh Sardar succeeded to his estate in the days of Sikh Misals, it was customary for him to be confirmed in his succession at Akal Takht.*

Now, the novice Sikhs are also initiated here into the ceremony of *Amrita* prior to their becoming Khalsa or the Pure Ones. The Immortalising Draught, the Amrit of the Khalsa, was prepared here for the first time in 1713 on Banda Bahadur's arrival. All the great meetings of the Community's representatives are also held at Akal Takht from time to time and every Sikh looks up to the place from which the guiding orders, considered as binding upon the whole Panth, are issued.

Akal Takht is a fine massive building of five storeys in height. While it was being constructed Emperor Jahangir offered to complete the building at his own expense†. Guru Har Gobind thankfully declined the offer, saying, "Let me and my Sikhs

*Captain C. M. Wade Political Assistant Ludhiana to Sir C.T. Metcalfe 1827.

†Prof. Teja Singh, Growth and Responsibility of the Sikhs.

raise this Throne of God with the labour of our own little resources. I want to make it a symbol of my Sikhs' service and sacrifice and not a monument to a king's generosity."

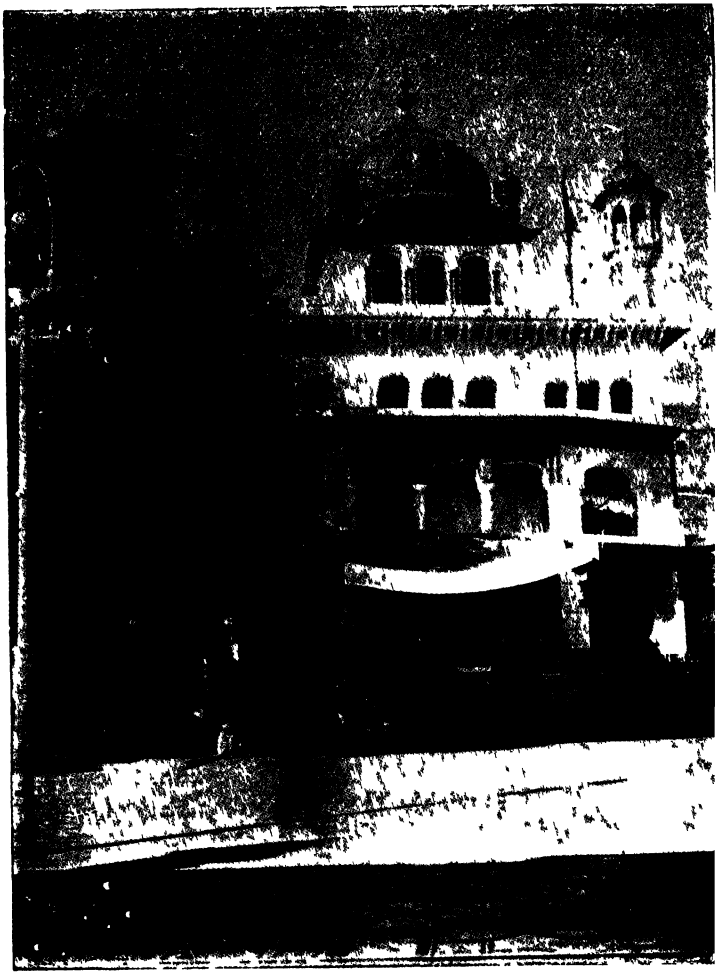
This building, too, was used to be demolished by the aggressors along with the Golden Temple. The first storey of the present building was prepared in 1774 while the upper four storeys were added by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. General Hari Singh Nalwa* donated a huge sum for its gold work, but the donation was mis-appropriated and the work was left undone for the *Sangat* to complete it.

There is a well, known as Akal Sar, just by the Akal Takht. It was built by Guru Har Gobind in 1612. A visitor would do well to see the Takht containing the arms with which the Warrior-Saint and His disciples fought freedom's battles over two centuries ago. These are preserved there with great care and are shown daily in the morning and the evening to the public:—

1. Guru Har Gobind's sword of '*Miri*'—symbol of social and political emancipation.

†Among the generals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, none is more celebrated than Brother Hari Singh, Nalwa, in whom the Guru-given Light of Nam burnt brilliantly. He has been described recently by an English historian as the world's greatest general—head and shoulders above the Napolean and Wellington.

'Nalwa proved himself one of the most able and popular Sikh governors which the Sikhs have had' (Capt: Wade). He was appointed governor of Kashmir in 1830. It may be remarked that his heroic deeds in the battles were the cause of intense dread of the Sardar's name so that the Afghan mothers still terrify naughty children thereby (History of the Panjab, p. 488).



AKAL TAKHT

2. Guru Har Gobind's sword of *'Piri'*—emblem *of spiritual salvation.*

3. Swords of the Tenth Master, Bhai Budha, Bhai Jetha, Baba Karm Singh, Bhai Ude Singh and Bhai Bidhi Chand.

4. Two-edged daggers of the martyrs Babas Dip Singh, Gur Baksh Singh and Naudh Singh.

5 Pistols of Baba Dip Singh and Baba Gur Baksh Singh.

6. Two arrows of the Tenth Master with gold ends.

7. Kirpans of Guru Har Gobind and Baba Dip Singh.

8. A mace of Guru Har Gobind, 16 seers in weight. This was given to Nawab Jassa Singh by Mata Sundri.

9. *Kharag* (*Tegha*, a long and heavy sword) of Bhai Bachitter Singh, 10 seers in weight.

10. *Katars* (Poniards) of Guru Har Gobind and of Sahib Ajit Singh and Sahib Jujhar Singh, the two elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh.

11. *Pesh Kabaz* (Rapier) of Guru Har Gobind and Baba Dip Singh.

12. *Chakkars* (Thin sharp edged quoits) of Baba Dip Singh.

13. *Ranjit Nagara* (Battle conquering drum). This was presented by Late Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha.

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**Babe Di Ber** :—This is a tree in the *pradakshina* just near the steps leading down from the Clock Tower. It is famous for it sheltered Bhai Budha from the scorching heat of the sun while supervising the construction of the Tank-Temple at the time of Gurus. It was at this place that the necessary implements for the work were daily distributed to all.

**Ramgarhia Towers**:— About a couple of hundred feet farther from this tree are seen two octagonal towers known as 'Ramgarhia Towers' lifting their heads far into the azure sky.

A street leading from *pradakshina* gives access to these, which were originally taller. The upper marble domes cracked with the earthquake of April, 1905. Instead of repairing, these beautiful domes were pulled down by the orders of the then Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar. These towers are exceptionally vantage places to gain a bird's eye-view of the city.

**Dukh Bhanjani Ber**:—At a few paces distance to these towers stands a famous tree, *Dukh Bhanjani-Ber* or Healer of Affliction, on the side of the Tank. The pilgrims flock to this site of the Tank for a bath having faith in their hearts that this spot has an efficiency of curing every disease. The following story is related in this concern:—

During the life-time of Guru Ram Das, the youngest daughter of Duni Chand, a rich man of Patti, in Lahore District, had her fate like the youngest daughter of King Lear of the Shakespeare's

play. The girl was married to an incurable leper because she had said that it was the Almighty God Who cherished them all, the parents were only a pretext to carry out His will. Wandering and carrying her husband in a basket the faithful girl came to Guru ka Chak. Laying the basket by the side of the Tank, which was then in the form of a shady pool and being excavated, the girl went to the near by village to beg alms and pay her obeisance to Guru Ram Das, the fountain whence she had derived the True Light.

In her absence, the leper heard from the Sikhs, who were working near by, about the greatness of the Master and His Tank. So he determined to test the efficacy of the 'Water of Immortality' on himself. He left the basket and crawled into the water, holding the bank of the pool with one hand. To his great surprise he was cured of his leprosy in a flash. He came out and sat beside the bank, waiting for his faithful wife. She returned but her consternation knew no bounds. In the perfect proportions of the man she could not discover her husband. She took him to be an impostor. In vain did the man essay to explain to her the cause of this metamorphosis. Remonstrance and argument had no effect on her. The devotees of the Guru, who were working near by, bore witness to the fact that he was really the same man she had brought in her basket but the lady still remained sceptical. On this they told her that the matter might be referred to the Master. So both then came to Sat Guru, Whose glance brought to

them eternal peace. The whole matter was narrated. The Guru smiled and said, "Thou sayest this pool hath no efficacy. It is in fact supreme among all places of pilgrimages. If thou even yet believeth not, see the man is still affected with leprosy on one hand with which he was holding the bank of he pool. Let him dip it into the water and thou shalt see the result. And whoever batheth in this Tank shall obtain balm for his wounded spirit. The late leprous cripple put his hand into the water and it was immediately healed. The lady was convinced of her mistake. Both fell at Master's feet and thereafter worked in labour of love as His disciples.

**Thara Sahib**:—Adjoining the last mentioned place is a room known as Thara Sahib where Guru Granth Sahib remains open throughout the day. The historical fact linked with the holiness of this place is related thus :—

Wazir Khan, Emperor's courtier of the time, was struck down with dropsy and given up as incurable by all the physicians. He had some hope in Divine Power. So he came to Guru Arjan and prayed for a cure. The Master asked Bhai Budha, who was carrying a basket of earth from the Tank at that time, to cure the patient. Wholly absorbed in service Bhai Budha poured the contents of the basket on Wazir Khan. This had a wonderful and miraculous effect. The dropsy disappeared at once. Wazir Khan's faith in his Master was more confirmed and he built a raised platform at this place to keep alive this fact. This was made pacca by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

**Ath Sath Tirath** :—Adjoining Thara Sahib is another small shrine called Ath Sath Tirath— shrine equivalent to 68 *Tiraths*. Guru Nanak, once left quietly the busy city of Kartarpur and sought seclusion in this place.* Angad, the Second-Nanak, accompanied by Bhai Budha came searching and found the Master here in wrapt contemplation. Bhai Budha inquired of the Spiritual Teacher as to why He had renounced a popular place like Kartarpur for this lonely spot. The Master, in reply, declared this place to be Holiest of the Holy and blessed it with following words :—

'Serve Sat Guru Who is likened to a fathomless sea, earn the gem of the True Name. The dirt of passions is washed away by bathing in the Tank of Immortality and one gets full contentment.'

*Maru Mahalla* I.

**Guru ka Bagh** :—A little further from the last place is a passage leading from *pradakshina* to Guru ka Bagh or Guru's Garden and Baba Atal. Besides the beautiful plots for holding religious congregations, the free dispensary, Guru ka Langar (free kitchen),

*Suraj Parkash, *p*-1765.

†What is spiritual life in the temple of flesh, without a full meal? The very first Temple made by Guru Nanak, therefore was the Temple of Bread or Guru ka Langar. In this common Temple of Bread, the Bread of God was made free to the children of man. Every Sikh Sangat and Gurdwara is marked with the presence of this Temple. No one could pay homage to the Third-Nanak, irrespective of caste, creed or rank, without taking meals in this Temple. This simple Temple has a lofty ideal of "Universal Brotherhood". Serving all by this Temple, 'Bread and water belong to the Lord' is the common utterance of the Sikhs.

Khalsa High School are located in this garden. A beautiful *Serai* Guru Ram Das Niwas Asthan† for pilgrims has recently been constructed here, to which is attached a grand 'Guru Ram Das Library' to satisfy the thirst of the literary public. Not many a year back this garden was a staying place for *Sadhus* of all kinds and sects, who used to visit the Golden Temple at the times of the fairs. Here one could see then corpulent naked faqirs, sitting in meditation, besmeared with ashes and surrounded by devotees; ascetics sitting or lying in beds studded with pointed iron-nails; sadhus in contemplation near the smouldering fire, distributing ashes to women and men around them. But with the reform, this has passed away and the place is left in peaceful repose as a small public park. New offices of Local and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committees are situated in this park.

Besides the pavilions with artificial water-falls and springs, there are two pavilions of historical importance. One is known as Manji Sahib, which commemorates the place where Guru Arjan used to hold congregations. The other is remembered as Shahid Ganj. It stands a witness to the sacrifices of the Sikhs, which were made to rescue the Golden

†The management for the comfort of foreigners is excellent and praiseworthy. Free lodging, free boarding from *Langar*, free electric lights, free beding etc., are the most important features of the management. Every facility which 'Pardesi' requires is available in this Serai and one forgets his home after he puts up there. I am of opinion that this Serai is one of its kind and second to none in India'. M.A. Ghafoor, Grad A.E., M.E.E.

Temple from the tyrannical rulers who were profaning this Sacred Place. The dead bodies of some martyrs were burnt here.

**Baba Atal** :—Through Guru ka Bagh the pilgrims go to Baba Atal which is located to the south-west of the Golden Temple. Beautifully planned and exquisitely finished Baba Atal, a nine-storey tower, 150 feet high and surmounted with gilded dome, stands on the bank of a tank called Kaulsar. The number of storeys counts the years of the age of Atal Rai, son of Guru Har Gobind Sahib, who was cremated at this site in 1628. Spirituality and wit attained by Atal Rai had him known as *Baba*, an old man. In his memory the public raised a mound here. Later in 1778 the foundation of the present building was laid and in 1784 it bore the shape of a lofty tower.

In the ground-floor of the tower there is a small inner room where Holy Scripture is kept open. Hundreds of pilgrims go round this place, touch their foreheads to take off the dust and press the marble edges of it reverently as if to shampoo the tired limbs of the young Baba. Here the poor are fed in hundreds every day.

The first floor has its walls and ceiling decorated with frescoes, representing episodes from the life of Guru Nanak. A fine panoramic view of the whole city may be had from the upper storeys.

The tank Kaulsar attached to this temple derives its name from Mata Kaular, the daughter of Qazi



of Mozang, a suburb of Lahore, and a devotee of Guru Har Gobind.*

In the outer *pradakshina* stands a cenotaph of Nawab Jassa Singh, who died at Amritsar in 1783. While that of Nawab Kapur Singh, which was just near by, was demolished by the Gurdwara Managing Committee in 1931.

**Shahid Bunga**:—Next place of importance in the outer *pradakshina* of Darbar Sahib is Shahid Bunga or 'House of Martyr.' In 1760 Baba Dip Singh, a Sikh General, on hearing that the Golden Temple was being defiled by Ahmad Shah Abdali, came with an army fighting his way through the enemies. About four miles away from Amritsar, his head was almost cut off. The invetrate hero holding his head with one hand went cutting through the flanks of enemies, who were vanquished and pursued with great slaughter to the town of Amritsar, which they were compelled to evacuate then. On reaching Darbar Sahib, Baba ji expired at this place. A cenotaph was built and the spot is much respected by the Sikhs.†

The last historical place in the outer *pradakshina* is a tree called Bhai Salo's Ber. It is situated near the bridge and is also known as Illachi Ber.

*Macauliffe's Sikh Religion, Vol. IV, *p*-48:– Guru Har Gobind in 1621 caused a tank to be dug near the Golden Temple. The Tank, called Kaulsar, is one of the holiest in Amritsar. But the date is mentioned as 1627 in Encyclopædia of Sikh Literature, Vol. I, *p*-229. It is also held that name 'Kaulsar' was given to the Tank because lotus (*Kaul*) flourished there.

†Shahid Ganj, where Baba Dip Singh's body was cremated, stands near Chatiwind Gate and is worth seeing.

Although the Golden Temple is unique in its charm and is most important of the attractions of Amritsar, there are in the city many other Sikh temples with historical associations. They are :—

**Santokhsar**, the Tank of Contentment, is situated in the heart of the city just near the Town Hall. The excavation of the tank commenced in the time of Guru Ram Das but Guru Arjan completed it in 1588. To seek Master's blessings for a son Bhai Santokha of Peshawar came to Amritsar, but the Divine Master blessed His disciple with something immortal. It was naming this tank after disciple's name as Santokhsar.

**Gurdwara Lohgarh** was, in the time of the Sixth Guru 1629, the scene of an engngament between the Sikh army and the forces of the Moghal Emperor. Its fundation was laid by Guru Har Gobind in 1614.

**Gurdwaras Ram Sar and Bibek Sar** are situated near the Chatiwind Gate. Gurdwara Ramsar was prepared in 1602-03. It marks the site where the Fifth Master, compiled Guru Granth Sahib. Bibeksar was raised by Guru Har Gobind in 1628.

Thus the Sikhs had to fight so hard and continuously for the retention of these Sacred Places that, in course of time, there came into existence a saying that under every inch of the Golden Temple there lies the head of a Sikh. Marked with the blood of martyrs the Golden Temple still stands as an institution of Hari Kirtan imparting the teachings of Truth, Love and Sacrifice.

## HOW OTHERS SEE
# GOLDEN TEMPLE, AMRITSAR

1. The more I see it the more I wish to see it. More wonderful than this Unique Golden Wonder, this divine golden lotus that glooms night and day, is the spirit of perfect fraternity and equality between men of all races and creeds and between men and women that reigns here. Still more wonderful is the burning devotion of all the people, young and old, who stream in to offer prayers and worship from 2 A. M. till 11 P. M. every day, a thing unparalleled in the world. Many a house of God of Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Parsees, Jains and Jews have I seen and I can say that I have found the true spirit of religion more alive here than anywhere else.

Bruised, broken, bleeding in spirit I came here and go hence healed and made whole, a better, stronger, happier man. For this rich, this priceless and spiritual gift I am indebted immeasurably to Sri Darbar Sahib. To all pilgrims of the Eternal Truth and Beauty I may in all humility say 'you cannot do better than come to the Golden Temple.'

*S. M. Micheal, Journalist and Author*
*Rownad.*

2. A rare and impressive monument to the spirituality of a distinguished race.

*C. E. Lewis De-Premier,*
*Baharain, P. C. England.*

3. To enter in the Golden Temple of Amritsar is to obtain comfort for the body and peace for the soul. At least I embraced indescribable comfort and peace of heart. For the time being all worries and troubles left me and I was feeling as if I were a child just beginning my fresh start.

*Dr. M. N. Kaul, M. A., Ph. D., Berlin.*

4. The Temple just makes you feel the truth and God with you.

*Rosamand Bruce,*
*Glen Green, Hollywood.*

5. A journey half around the world would be well taken if alone to see this jewel of architecture.

*E. R. Van Sickle, New York City.*

6. There is no separation.

*Panline Bolken, Holland.*

7. The India League Delegation from London visited the Golden Temple. We congratulate the Sikh Community on the permanence of their tradition, the magnificence of their art and the discipline which has offered an example and proved endurance to the world.

*Ellen Wiehinson, Nomia Whately,*
*Leonard W. Matter.*

8. Immortal memory of Darbar Sahib will linger in my memory until the last days of my death.

*S. Kane Ko Osaka, Japan.*

9. A marvellous place and unforgettable.

*June Darner, Harmover, Germany.*

10. I have to admit that Golden Temple is one of the wonders of the world, but I have found a temple still infinitely more beautiful in the lofty teachings of the Sikh Religion.

*Emgineg, Mariud, Boits Fort, Belgium.*

11. Remembrance of my visit to a marvellous Temple where the real spirit of brotherly love is not only preached but carried on without distinction of creed, race or political ideals. If more of my countrymen should visit this delightful place of India, how much better understanding of our people then would be.

*J. H. Wanderwall, 250 New York City.*

12. One of my greatest impression of India.

*Rev. Loubet of Paris, France.*

13. Solemn, superb and splendid.

*Rabindra Nath Chatterji, Calcutta.*

14. Really is it a true fact that if any body visits the Temple, will not like to go away and leave the doors of the Temple.

*Shanti R. Shah, World Cycle Tourist.*

15. We have travelled in many lands, but nowhere have we ever seen such an exquisite gem of a temple as the Golden Temple of Amritsar.

*Lee Meriwether St. Louis, U. S. A. and Jessie Gair Wether.*

16. Friendly feelings for mankind irrespective of caste and creed are appraviasing. The arrangement in the free kitchen is praiseworthy, there everybody is fed whosoever comes and asks for food.

*N. R. Levnshurm, Germany.*

17. So far the passive resistance is concerned one could have a guiding star in Golden Temple at Amritsar.

*H. B. L. Clante Radleth, England.*

18. It is really a very inspiring and touching building. One cannot but become tempted to pass his greater part of life here.

*Abin. S. Underbrill, Counseller at Law, New York.*

19. Universal brotherhood is the tenet which is same to be found, if one were to visit Golden Temple at Amritsar where everyone is treated equally and on brotherly feelings without prejudice of caste or creed and irrespective of any religion.

*B. Jkharas, Bombay.*

20. Two hours I spent in the Golden Temple are impossible to forget. The whole visit was very remarkable and made me feel fairly torn in two.

*Georgina A. Gollock, London.*

21. We have been very fortunate in being permitted to visit this most beautiful Temple in India. The beauty consists not only in the magnificent gold work and lovely painting but in the beauty of loveliness and service which comes from the very presence of the Great Reality. Its cosmopolitan and puritan spirit can contribute much to the new India.

*B. W. Tucker 'American',*
*Santi Niketan, Bengal.*

22. A usual joy and spiritual uplift.

*Hes Tunker, M. D., New York*

23. One of the most impressive sights we have seen.

*Charlotte Webb, Syvia.*

24. Cannot speak too highly of the wonders of the place. It is really marvellous.

*A. Smith, London.*

25. It is a beautiful religion and so the Temple is. I think this religion is the finest religion in the world. Love which I have found in the Sikhs is the best thing in the world.

*Yoyawachara, Mohana,*
*Buddhist Monk.*

25. The Golden Temple at Amritsar truely deserves the title "Golden". As one looks and wonders at it, one cannot help recalling to one's mind the lives of that noble band of great Gurus who by devotion and self-sacrifice established it. The Temple

beautiful and majestic is very much grander on festival occassions.

*B. J. Vaswani, England.*

26 I was very much delighted with the picturesque and real god-like view it (the Golden Temple) presented. The singing inside the Temple was simply charming.

*Dukhundke, England.*

27. The features of the Temple shall ever remain green in our minds. Really we feel proud to have such a Holy Temple which sends a thrill when looked at.

*L. Bahadur Lal, City Scout Commissioner Ghazipore.*

28. It is one of the most beautiful temples, I have ever visited during my wanderings around the world.

*E. Jones, London.*

29. Very beautiful, very sacred and a lesson in religion and art. One is not liable to forget.

*John B. Shead, U. S. A.*

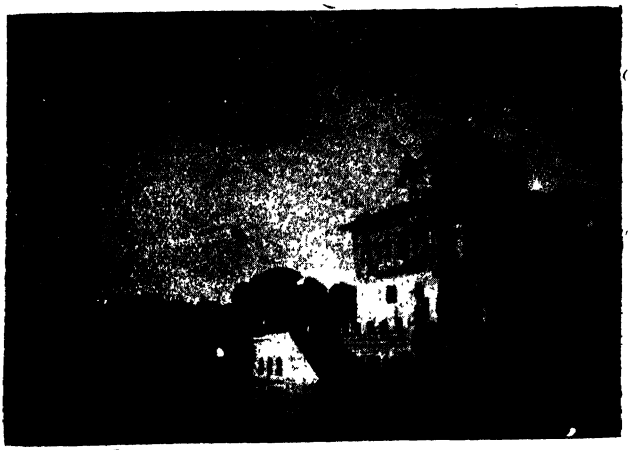
30. I visited the Golden Temple and was highly pleased with whatever I saw. I am sure there cannot be anything like this in the whole world. The precepts of the Sikh Religion if fully followed will solve the difficulties of the human race.

*K. J. Modi, Karachi.*

# TARN TARAN

Fourteen miles to the south of Amritsar, and on the branch railway-line to Patti and Kasur, another noteworthy place is the great Sikh Shrine at Tarn Taran.

The spot where the town and the temple were founded by the Fifth-Nanak, Guru Arjan, in 1590,



Temple and Tank of Tarn Taran

was before this time a thick jungle with a fertile soil and the fresh and exhilarating atmosphere. The fertile soil was annually cultivated by the neighbouring

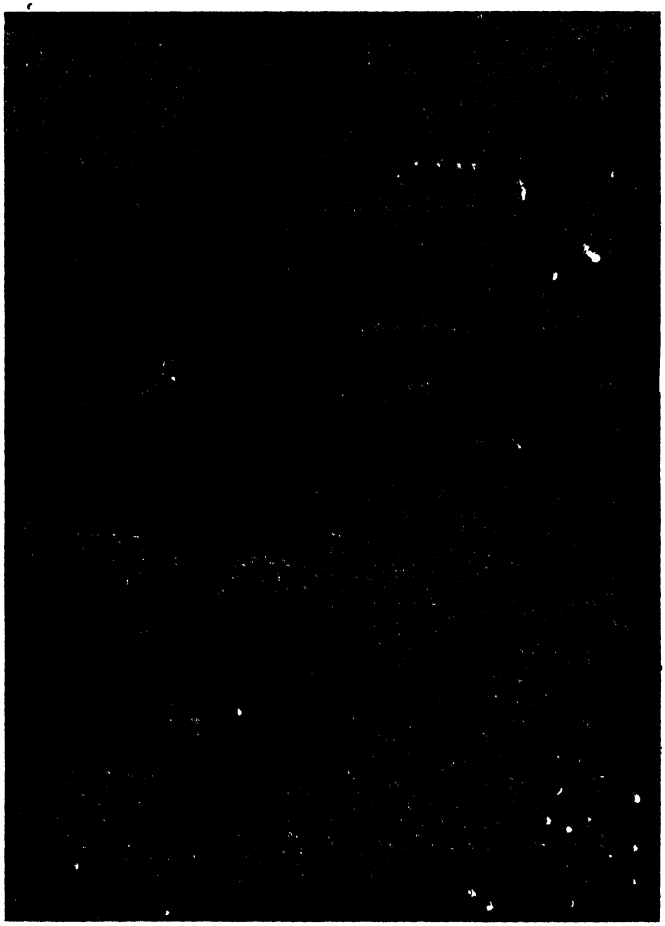
villagers and yielded good harvest. Might was the only criterion to determine the proprietorship of this yield. Sat Guru Arjan, after completing Hari Mandir at Amritsar, came here while going to Goindwal* and suggested to the villagers to end their annual feud by parting with the land that was proving a bone of contention. The villagers agreed and this land was purchased by the Master from them† to build the present temple and tank for the devotional ablutions of the disciples and named it Tarn Taran meaning 'whence people swim across the Sea of Ignorance to save many a drowning soul.'

In order to make this temple and tank, along with a few huts, pucca, Guru Arjan, at a great expense, built lime-kilns and caused bricks to be baked. When these were seen by Amir-ud-Din, son of Nur-ul-Din, the local Mohammedan governor, they were, according to the tyrannical custom of the age, seized by him for the construction of a seraglio designed by the Emperor. The Sikhs on seeing this suggested to the Guru to write to the Emperor to allow the tank to be finished and to inspire fear in the tyrant. The Guru, Who was the essence of humility, refused to take notice of the outrage. He said that God had not yet ordered the tank to be made *pucca*, wherefore they were to stop its construction altogether. 'Mercy,' continued the Guru, 'is the basis of religious worship;

*Goindwal is another Sikh shrine of great historical importance founded by Guru Amar Das on the bank of the river Beas and about twelve miles away from Tarn Taran.

†The settlement papers of Amritsar District, 1891-92.

KAR-SEWA 1931



Millions of disciples are seen, who came to partake this service.

wherefore we should have mercy on everyone. All the acts of him, who hath no mercy in his heart, are invain."* Accordingly the construction was abandoned.

After Guru Gobind Singh, as previously stated, the Sikhs were hunted with the fullest venom, with all resources that the Moghal Empire had at its command. So the temple remained a '*kacha*' hut and the tank an irregular pond till the Sikhs came into power. It was in 1775 that Sardar Khushal Singh and Sardar Budh Singh of Faizullapur joined by Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia destroyed Nur-ul-Din's edifice and employed the bricks, of which Nur-ul-Din's son Amir-ud-Din had robbed the Guru, in the construction of the tank and the temple. The remaining part of the work was completed and the final shape given as we see to-day by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1830.

The temple, the nucleus round which the development of the town centres, is situated on the southern edge of the tank, which is about 1,000 feet square. The magnificent temple bright with gilding like that of Amritsar is beautifully decorated with paint and mosaic inside and is an interesting piece of architecture.* At one corner of the tank stands a tall magnificent tower of masonary work.† It was built by Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh. He intended to build three others, one at each corner, but died before he could accomplish his project.

*Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Vol. III, *p*-25.

†Punjab Govt. Gazetteer, Amritsar District.

Crowds of pilgrims, amounting to one hundred thousand, and even more, flock to this shrine every month, on the occasion of Amavas fair, to have bath in the holy tank and pay homage to the Guru. The fair held in March (*Chet*) and the other in August (*Bhadron*) are more important, being in memory of commencement and completion of the tank.

This tank has gained much fame because of the many thousands of lepers who have been cured by bathing in the tank, which has miraculous healing effect on persons so afflicted. This mythical power of the water would appear to have been pronounced by Guru Arjan.'*

The management of this temple and that of Amritsar remained in the same hands till the recent Gurdwara Reform Movement. So practically every rule and custom observed at Amritsar is practised at Tarn Taran and even history of the latter resembles that of the former. Since the enactment of the Gurdwara Act the management of the temple is under the control of a Sikh Committee, elected every third year.

There are other places of Sikh historical importance in the vicinity of the temple and in the neighbourhood of the town, for which one is referred to 'Brief History of Sri Darbar Sahib, Tarn Taran,' in Gurmukhi, by the same author.

*Punjab Notes and Querries, 1885.

## ERRATA

| Page | Line | Read | For |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 12 | dining | dinning |
| 6 | 5 | Ninth | Nineth |
| 6 | 26 | Sis | Shahid |
| 8 | 12 | occurring | occuring |
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| 54 | 18 | H. | M. |
| 56 | 23 | bonds | bounds |
| 76 | 6 | for | by |
| 78 | 13 | hoary-headed | hoar-headed |
| 78 | 14 | Har Gobind | Har Guru Gobind |
| 85 | 7 | the pool | he pool |
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